

APPLICATION COVER SHEET
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

<p>Legal Name of Applicant: Vermont Department of Education</p>	<p>Applicant's Mailing Address: 120 State Street Montpelier, VT 05620-2501</p>
<p>State Contact for the School Improvement Grant</p> <p>Name: Rae Ann Knopf .</p> <p>Position and Office: Deputy Commissioner</p> <p>Contact's Mailing Address: Vermont Department of Education 120 State Street Montpelier, VT 05620-2501</p> <p>Telephone: (802) 828-5101</p> <p>Fax: (802) 828-3140</p> <p>Email address: Rae.Knopf@state.vt.us</p>	
<p>Chief State School Officer (Printed Name): Armando Vilaseca</p>	<p>Telephone: 802-828-3135</p>
<p>Signature of the Chief State School Officer: </p>	<p>Date: April 2, 2010</p>
<p>The State, through its authorized representative, agrees to comply with all requirements applicable to the School Improvement Grants program, including the assurances contained herein and the conditions that apply to any waivers that the State receives through this application.</p>	

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Chief State School Officer (Printed Name): Armando Vilaseca	Telephone: 802-828-3135
Signature of the Chief State School Officer: X_____	Date: Revisions – 4/2/10
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ATTACHMENT H - TRANSFORMATION OVERVIEW

DEFINING CHANGES AT THE STUDENT, TEACHER, AND SCHOOL LEVEL

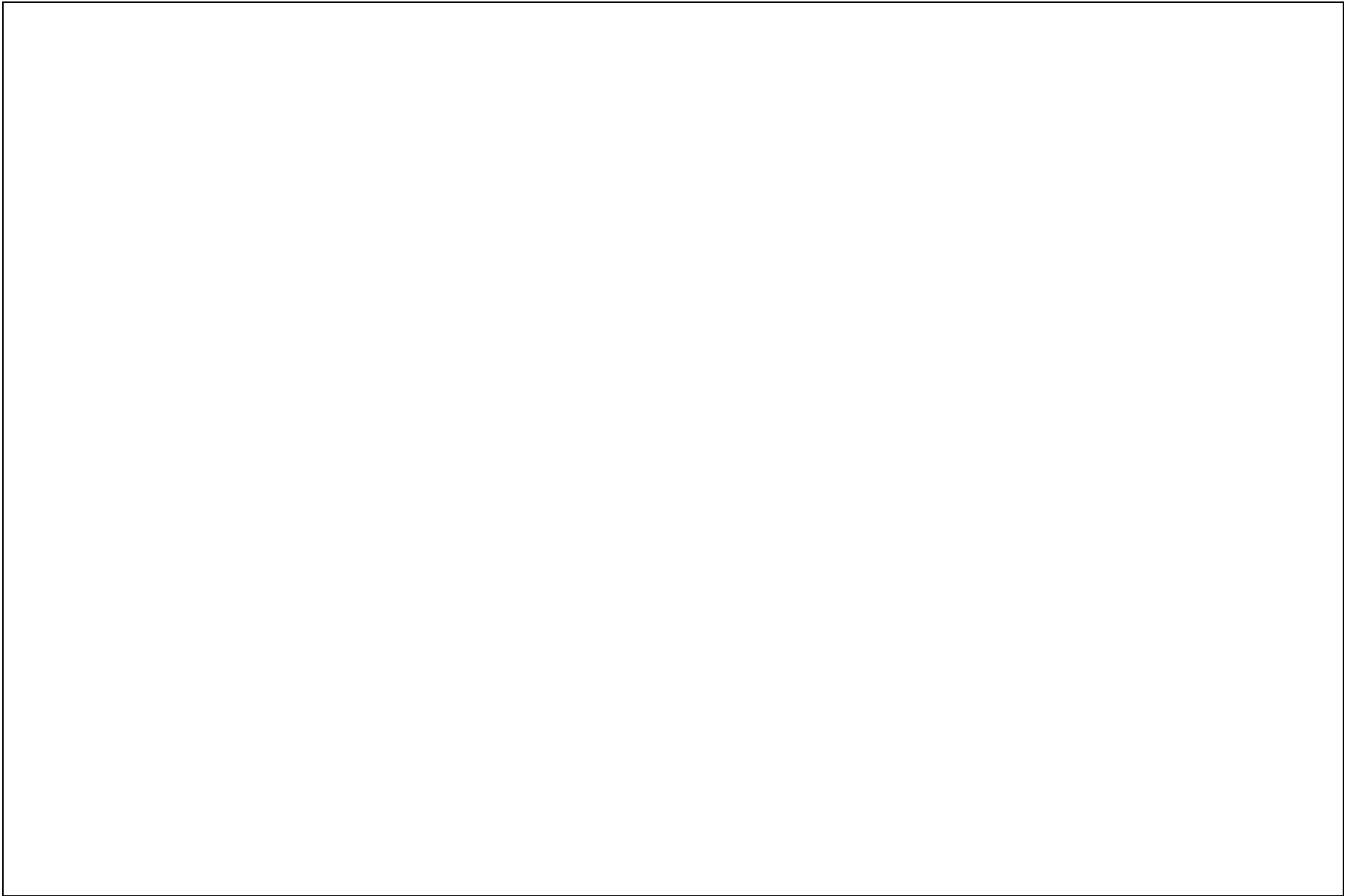
As excerpted from the Transformation Policy Commission Report – Opportunity to Learn, 2009

Expanding from	Moving to
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some students achieve • 20th century academics • Expectations vary for different cohorts • “Stand and deliver” curriculum; limited options for students • Separate disciplines • Rote memorization of facts; content mastery; answers; “mile wide/inch deep” • Common sense; thesis • High reliance on tests and quizzes • School-based instruction • Age-based grade level cohorts • Too many students disengaged • Teacher as expert; dogma • Teachers as workers • Individual, short-term professional development • School administration • Public school compliance • Inputs • Funding mechanisms limit options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All learners achieve • 21st century academics + 21st century skills • Every learner graduates college-ready • Personalized, flexible learning options; expanded opportunities for learners • Interdisciplinary learning • Deep understanding of core concepts & higher-level thinking; questions; experiential • Imagination; synthesis • Demonstration of proficiency through application of knowledge/skills in real world tasks/projects • Community/world-based learning • Stages of learning progression • All learners active • Teacher as facilitator of learning; discovery • Teachers as professional knowledge leaders • Systemic, substantive, job-embedded professional development • Educational leadership • Education quality and continuous improvement in learner outcomes • Outcomes • Funding leveraged more effectively regionally

ATTACHMENT G
Vermont Department of Education
School Improvement Review Team Assessment Rubric

Criteria/Indicator	SCALE	
Requirement 1: Data Analysis & Intervention Selection (10 points)	Meets Requirements _____	Requires Revision _____
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overview of school AYP data -External trend data -Student achievement data -Other student outcome data -Analysis of culture, conditions & practices -Analysis of root causes 	All data sets are current, carefully examined and provide evidence students are performing at levels below state standards. The data analysis is used to identify focus areas to address root causes and areas for improvement for each area (administrators and teachers; curriculum and materials; master schedule, classroom schedules, and classroom management/discipline; students and parents).	All relevant data sets have not been examined, are vaguely examined or do not reflect a thoughtful, systemic approach to addressing root causes in school improvement implementation planning.
Required Revisions:		

Requirement 2: LEA Capacity (10 points)	Meets Requirements _____	Requires Revision _____
<p>- <i>LEA capacity</i></p>	<p>LEA has a plan that meets all requirements.</p> <p>LEA has a plan to serve all Tier I, II and III schools in their Supervisory Union/District.</p> <p>LEA has made progress on previous strategies required as part of State School Improvement System under Commissioner's Required Actions.</p> <p>LEA has formed a Supervisory Union/District team that is comprised of the Superintendent, Special Education Coordinator, Curriculum Coordinator and principals of identified schools.</p> <p>LEA agrees to participate in all state required trainings and meetings and collaborate with state school improvement coaching team.</p> <p>LEA demonstrates effective use of funds by maximizing local and other federal and state funds to work in tandem with school improvement grant funds.</p> <p>LEA has school board support for implementation.</p>	<p>LEA plan is not reflective of all areas listed to the left.</p>
<p>Required Technical Assistance:</p>		



Requirement 3: Preliminary Budget (10 points)	Meets Requirements _____	Requires Revision _____
- <i>Completed budget form</i>	<p>The LEA's preliminary budget:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Covers a three year period. - Includes the number of Tier I and Tier II schools that the LEA commits to serve and indicates the intervention model (turnaround, restart, closure, or transformation) selected for each school. - Request for each Tier I and Tier II school is of sufficient size and scope to support full and effective implementation of the selected intervention over a period of three years. - Reflects the number of Tier III schools the LEA commits to serve and the school improvement activities to be implemented over the three-year grant period. - Request for each Tier III school includes the services the LEA will provide the school. 	Requested information is omitted or not clearly stated.
Required Revisions:		

Vermont State Education Goals

As Vermont educators, we seek to ensure that every child graduates with an awareness of their own relevance in the world at large and the foundational knowledge and skills to pursue their aspirations. Every child in Vermont should complete their education by meeting high expectations in the 21st Century knowledge and skills essential for success in college, careers, and citizenship.

Simply put, every child must:

- Have an opportunity to learn in 21st Century learning environments.
- Graduate high school having achieved proficiency in reading, math, science, writing and 21st Century skill development.
- Be well prepared to enter college or training in a career of their choosing.

According to the State Board of Education Strategic Plan, we will:

- Develop and implement defined learning expectations that align with 21st Century skill demands and desired outcomes for public education.
- Promote and support a learning culture and teaching and learning practices that anticipate multiple ways of learning and yield deep understanding and applications of core concepts and skills on the part of students.
- Provide assessments that offer comprehensive and ongoing options for learners to demonstrate proficiency and plan next steps.
- Address education system structures – including funding, governance and accountability – that support the attainment of our desired vision for the education system in Vermont.

Achieving these goals requires of us a bold new way of addressing problems old and new. We must hold on to a different vision for education that lives at the heart of our work – having new learning expectations for all learners, embracing new and multiple ways of deep learning and understanding, providing challenge and individual opportunity through proficiency based education, and insisting on equity in education outcomes. While graduation, proficiency and 21st century success are all key outcomes of our work, we know all learners in Vermont do not advance successfully in the current educational paradigm. In order to address this problem effectively, we must be willing to dig deeper to understand how we might change our approach to teaching and leading in order to accomplish these goals for every Vermont learner. Times are different for our young people, our teachers, our principals, our communities and our department. External factors are affecting our schools in ways we do not yet fully grasp. Therefore, we must continually explore these changes to understand how they are influencing the learning process.

For those students who are most disadvantaged, we must create a system that compels necessary adaptation and innovation now, yet continues to do so over time. This is how we will provide for all our students the high-quality education for which our state is known, by creating communities where *all* learners thrive.

Our Greatest Strengths Present Unique Challenges

Historically we are known for innovation in education, small school communities, low student teacher ratios, and high inclusion rates for children with disabilities. Over the last ten years however, we have experienced an eighteen percent decline in student population and a ten percent decline in inclusion rates for children with disabilities. By 2030 the number of seniors in our state is expected to eclipse the number of children under eighteen by twenty-five percent. Our educational structures have not adjusted to these

changes. Currently we have a 1:5 staffing to student ratio and 1:11 teaching ratio, with para-educators to teachers being 1:2. The average school district size in Vermont is 341 students. Eighty-five percent of our schools have fewer than 500 students. Thirty-two percent of our schools have fewer than 150 students. Only fourteen towns have more than 8,000 people with the largest having 38,000 residents. Yet, we are in the top five states for student achievement. While most states are now working to have lower teacher student ratios and smaller schools, we find there is such a thing as too small and too geographically disbursed to provide the kinds of learning opportunities we want our children to have. More importantly, we find that in our own state these demographics have not translated to improved achievement levels for our most disadvantaged students. This is in part because we have a system that does not easily adjust to issues surrounding declining student enrollment or readily adopt new practices to improve learning.

Only when we disaggregate our student achievement data do we get to the heart of the issue. We know for example that like most other states, Vermont children who live in poverty and with disabilities or are English language learners in large part under-perform in core subject areas. And while we have poverty and minority populations, these young people are in many cases spread out across our state without the numbers or concentration of urban centers or larger states. For this and other reasons mentioned above, it is imperative that we develop a strong system of statewide support for improving instruction and learning for all our young people.

To further our understanding of the issues facing Vermont educators, we conducted our own research study, *Roots of Success: Effective Practices in Vermont Schools* (Vermont Department of Education, 2009). A major result of this study was the identification of key features of successful schools within Vermont and its rural context. The schools in this study consistently beat the odds, with students in poverty and with other disadvantages performing at the highest achievement levels despite their circumstances. As such, this information has become a key component of our reform platform. This report tells a story. The story is that even though Vermont outperforms most states in popular national measures, we know we have young people whose educational needs are not being met. The story is that we don't accept the notion of the bell curve and we believe it is a moral imperative to be purposeful about instituting practices that result in effective teachers and principals who can pay attention to the learning achievements of all their students within the context of their communities. These schools provide both high expectations for learning and the kinds of environments in which those expectations are actually achieved. In hindsight, the findings are not surprising – reinforcing research conducted in other countries and states – but they also confirm what many of us recognize by experience. Ensuring every child learns and excels comes down to four factors: 1) expectations for learning and teaching, 2) leadership, 3) school culture and 4) family engagement.

More specifically, the schools that were successful in ensuring all children were able to learn and thrive in their communities had the following eight attributes of effective systems:

1. **High Expectations** – believing all students can succeed.
2. **Continuous Improvement** – taking responsibility for students' achievement, working to continually improve practice to address students' diverse needs.
3. **Leadership** – providing strong leadership.
4. **Use of Data** – using data in an ongoing way to provide feedback to staff, as well as monitor progress for and support students.
5. **Professional Teaching Culture** – establishing a professional teaching culture that supports high quality instruction.
6. **Student Supports** – ensuring a comprehensive and highly functioning support system is in place to address students' academic, emotional, behavioral and social needs.
7. **School Climate** – creating a supportive climate where expectations are clear and all students, adults and family members are valued.
8. **Family Engagement** – building constructive respectful relationships with families and involving them in their child's learning.

From Theory to Practice

Admittedly, establishing a coherent framework with these features in our schools takes time, consistent leadership and school-wide engagement. Having all schools in Vermont fully embody these attributes will take support, commitment and a sense of shared responsibility and leadership from all of us – the department, the State Board, the Legislature, leaders and members of the community, the Governor, educators, parents and students. With this collaborative focus from all levels we are confident that all children in all schools will succeed.

Our work must prioritize the best characteristics of implementation at all levels by:

- Aligning innovations to the goals, culture and capacity of our organizations and each other.
- Establishing fluency in the innovation(s), understanding the “what,” the “how,” and the “why” of the changes throughout our schools, not just at the top.
- Understanding the stages of implementation and implications for practice.
- Building implementation capacity, including resources, systemic adaptation to support changes and high-leverage policy to drive change.
- Systemic reflection and adaptation – the ability to measure what is working and what is not, and the willingness to continue what is working and discontinue what is not.

To move beyond pilots and demonstration sites, these efforts must be connected to key strategies for sustaining and scaling up best practices across the state, starting where it matters – at the interface between teachers and students. We must answer the questions:

- What needs to happen in the classroom so educators interact with learners as intended?
- At the school level?
- At the district/supervisory union levels?
- At the state level?

To effectively support and implement Vermont education system changes, we must recognize and respond to the real barriers to change. It is not that people resist change, but that people resist things like loss, incompetence, and disloyalty that they perceive accompany that change. Our teachers, principals, leaders and staff are experiencing: a) loss of old ways of doing things, b) fear of being incompetent in a new environment or responsibility, and c) concern over changing relationships, expectations and loyalties in the new system, structure or ways of working. In order to overcome these concerns, we must continue to engage those individuals in the process of creating the change and redefining structures and support systems to compel and reinforce the change (Westwind, 2009).

State Board of Education Transformation Policy Commission

Recognizing that moving from theory to practice requires systemic change and an interconnected policy framework to support and drive the change, the State Board of Education formed the Education Transformation Policy Commission in March 2009 to advise the Board in forming the framework. This commission, comprised of educators, legislators, organizational leaders, school board members, students and parents, put forth the following high leverage policy recommendations:

1. **Learning Expectations** – Redefine learning standards so they are aligned with 21st century performance demands and are fewer, higher and deeper.
2. **Student Assessments** – Align assessments with 21st century skills and shift when and how assessments are conducted.
3. **Teaching and Learning Practices** – Establish a teaching and learning model that emphasizes deeper learning, in-depth interdisciplinary applications, and required proficiency demonstrations, and require proficiency-based grading and graduation.
4. **Personalized Learning** – Establish a flexible education system that can support each learner to achieve at high levels.
5. **Educator Quality** – Design educator licensing, professional development, career ladders, evaluation and working conditions to support transformed educational practice.
6. **Systems and Structures** – Establish governance, funding, policies and learning structures to support 21st century education goals and practices.
7. **Postsecondary Connections** – Align PK-16 learning pathways and blend secondary and postsecondary learning experiences. Establish proficiency-based secondary graduation requirements and align secondary graduation requirements with postsecondary entry requirements.

For brief examples of how these recommendations might change the learning experience, see Attachment H. The State Board of Education is in the process of reviewing and prioritizing these recommendations for implementation. In anticipation of this, the Department of Education has engaged in its own process of redefining and prioritizing its work.

Reprioritizing the Work of the Vermont Department of Education

Vermont State Board of Education Transformation goals require a new emphasis on the part of Department of Education staff that models the tenets of transformation, supports the strategies and goals defined, and positions the department to increase support for schools in ultimately improving outcomes for all Vermont learners. Additionally, requirements from the U.S. Department of Education increasingly emphasize statewide reform and systematic efforts for a) improving the lowest performing schools, b) increasing achievement levels for all students, c) implementing data systems to assess student outcomes and improve instruction, and d) increasing teacher and principal effectiveness. Last and most importantly, the achievement data for our most disadvantaged students shows us we are not reaching them effectively with our current approach to school support and improvement.

The structure we have defined is intentionally focused on mobilizing all of our staff to –

1. Support schools in improving instruction and learning outcomes for all students.
2. Organize our work differently by forming school support teams comprised of multiple consultants with varying areas of educational expertise and working together both vertically and horizontally:
 - a. Vertically – multidisciplinary teams designed to work with school and supervisory union leadership teams to implement evidence-based practices from Pre-K to college and workforce designed to increase relevance, improve achievement and create success for all learners. Highest priority for support is given to schools identified for not achieving adequate yearly progress, especially those schools identified over multiple years. The focus is on those evidence-based practices (strategies) which have demonstrated success

- in closing achieving gaps for children in poverty, children with disabilities, and/or English language learners, and reducing the drop-out rate to zero.
- b. Horizontally – stay current on best practice in areas of related expertise, learn new skills and practices and bring all of this to bear on our school support, general supervision and teacher and student standards development work.
- 3. Ensure that Finance, IT, legal, HR, and communications are well integrated and support our ability to operate as a holistic system, all focused on the common goal of increasing learning opportunities for our children.
- 4. Provide general oversight and monitoring the use of federal and state funds. The application of regulation is provided in a way that assists educators and administrators in making informed decisions on the effective use of funds to improve instruction and student learning.
- 5. Define standards, assessments, and research and share best practice information. This will enable consultants working with schools to reflect on practice while remaining forward focused.
- 6. Define standards for teachers and principals in implementing best practice. Use the licensing process, educator preparation, and ongoing professional learning to guide leadership development, and reinforce best practice.

To this end, the Department has reprioritized its work and continues to restructure working relationships to facilitate a statewide system of support that improves instruction and learning outcomes for all Vermont learners and functionally recognizes the continuum of education from early childhood to young adulthood and beyond.

The Department works to embrace the following principles as we redefine our work –

- Communication, collaboration, cooperation, and coordination.
- High expectations for every one of our students – not just some.
- Purposeful engagement of our partners in the field – new and old.
- Developing new opportunities for leadership in education in Vermont.

The New Team Structure:

Integrated Support for Learning – *High quality instruction and leadership support make the most significant difference in student achievement.*

Content, grade level, special education, Educational Support System, special populations and programs, safe schools and school improvement consultants work together to create integrated teams of consultants with expertise in supporting schools to implement evidence based practices, school-wide improvement and prevention models in order to improve instruction and learning for every child in Vermont.

This division functions as one team but will be organized to provide emphasis in the following ways: 1) supports for early childhood through middle grades, and 2) supports for middle grades through post-secondary, focusing efforts on practices and models shown to be most effective in these environments. For years, we have attempted to improve high schools in our state to no real avail. Statewide change requires a comprehensive team of individuals with the skills, mindset, and drive to move this work forward across all secondary schools and Career and Technical Education centers. Yet, we also need a continuum of consultation that starts with early childhood and focuses on best practice implementation in the primary grades and creates a bridge from primary through middle to secondary. With this dual emphasis the priorities are clearer.

School support teams emphasize best practice implementation, sustainability, and scalability. Therefore much of our work is around building supervisory union and regional capacity to sustain high quality instruction and high expectations for learning for all students. Additionally, all schools are assigned one primary contact from these teams for purposes of communication, technical assistance, and planning.

General Supervision – *Proactive support, guidance and accountability systems share common strategies, methodologies and skill sets and more effectively engender long-term improvement.*

To build capacity in providing proactive, coherent oversight to schools and supervisory unions, federal funding oversight teams come together in one division to create a comprehensive approach to the use of federal funds; maximizing funds to complement state funds and implement best practice in the field. Best practices in focused monitoring are applied across programs, with multidisciplinary teams deployed to increase capacity and coherence. Teams focus on building supervisory union and regional capacity for federal programs and state regulatory implementation and internal expertise and problem solving to ensure sustained compliance. Departmental oversight teams interface directly with integrated support teams to strengthen the effectiveness of preventive efforts, action planning and remediation.

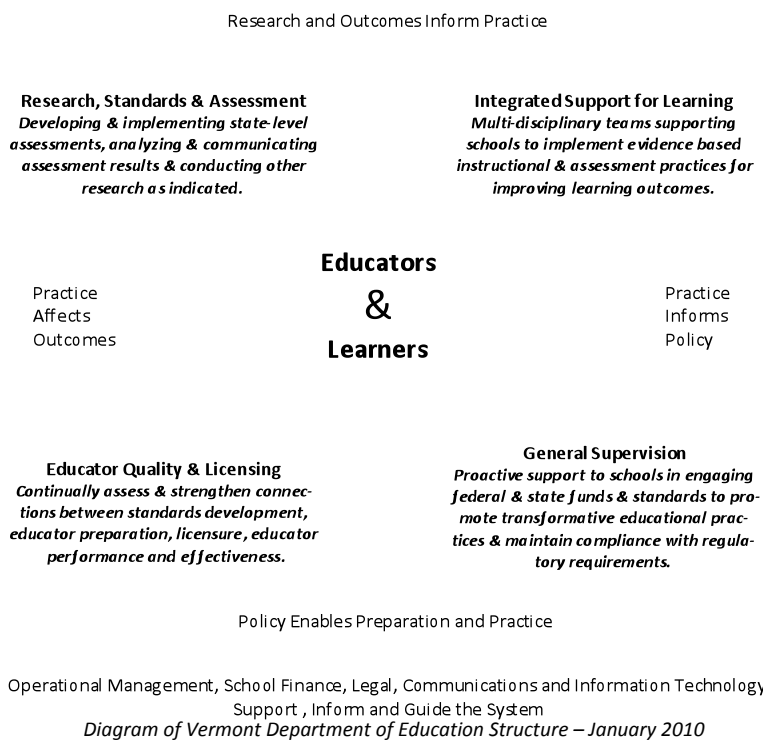
Educator Quality and Licensing - *The essentialness of well prepared, supported educators and leaders in the field – we know this makes the single greatest difference in the educational lives of our children.*

High quality teaching standards tied to evidence based teaching practices and content standards provide a foundation for teacher preparation and effectiveness. The Educator Quality Division focuses on strengthening connections between educator standards development and teacher preparation programs, increasing access to alternate pathways to licensure and reciprocity with New England states, and developing regional and state capacity in order to provide high quality educator and leadership professional learning programs.

Research, Standards, and Assessment – *High quality standards and assessments provide a framework for teaching and learning. Ongoing research into best practice and learning outcomes continually informs the standards development and implementation process.*

The Standards and Assessment team focuses on an effective implementation plan for engaging educators in the field and in facilitating all schools adopting and implementing state standards including the K-12 common core standards and accompanying assessments. This team continues to maintain the NECAP and NAEP systems concurrently during the transition period. This team also engages with other divisions to analyze the effectiveness of instructional practices and implement current and future research findings.

The diagram below provides an overview of this plan –



Using the framework outlined above, the department will continue to work actively over the next three years with the National Implementation Research Network, the Center on Positive Behavioral

Interventions and Supports, the Center on Instruction, the Center on Improvement, and the Center for Teacher Quality and Effectiveness, to implement a comprehensive and systemic approach to school improvement statewide. By engaging these external partners, the Vermont DOE will build capacity to focus and prioritize the work of Tier I, II and III schools in a continuous cycle of school improvement strengthening local capacity as we go. The department has established three school support teams. One to work intensively with district teams to support those schools identified as “lowest-achieving” and any schools in the those Supervisory Unions/Districts identified as Tier III; another to work with Tier III schools in Supervisory Unions that currently have no Tier I or Tier II schools; and a third team to work with schools proactively to prevent being identified for not making adequately yearly progress. These teams are also aligned vertically to span PK-12 and post secondary transitions. We anticipate that the structures and supports developed and implemented in the short term will serve as models for school improvement for *all* Vermont schools.

PART I: SEA REQUIREMENTS

As part of its application for a School Improvement Grant under section 1003(g) of the ESEA, an SEA must provide the following information.

In Vermont, for the purposes of the School Improvement Grant, when we refer to the LEA, we are referring to the Supervisory Union/District.

A. ELIGIBLE SCHOOLS: The following table includes our Tier I, Tier II and Tier III schools. No school in Vermont has had a graduation rate below 60%. In addition, the SEA must indicate whether it has exercised the option to identify as a Tier I, Tier II, or Tier III school a school that was made newly eligible to receive SIG funds by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2010.

Vermont determined the “persistently lowest achieving schools” for Tier I by ranking 63 Title I schools in improvement, corrective action or restructuring. This resulted in the identification of five schools as Tier I.

We determined the “persistently lowest achieving schools” for Tier II by ranking the 33 secondary schools eligible for but not receiving Title I funds. In Vermont secondary is defined as any school inclusive of the 9-12 span. This ranking also resulted in five schools being identified as Tier II schools.

No secondary school in Vermont has a cohort graduation rate of 60% or less so no schools were added to either Tier I or Tier II because of this criterion.

All public schools that met these criteria for consideration for either Tier I or Tier II were considered. No school was excluded because of “n” size.

The rankings were based on the “score” for each school’s performance on the four required indicators: achievement of all students on math and reading and the progress of all students on math and reading as measured by our state assessment. We did not weight any indicator but did a combined ranking for each Tier based on the four individual rankings.

To determine progress, we ranked the schools based on their change in proficiency. The smallest gain (or negative gain) was considered the least progress. We compared proficiency from the earliest possible NECAP year to proficiency on the 2008 NECAP.

For schools with a 9-12 grade span, this results in a two-year comparison. For other schools, it results in a four-year grade comparison.

LEA Name	ncesleaid	School Name	ncesschid	Tier Level
ADDISON CENTRAL SUPV UNION	5099903	BRIDPORT CENTRAL SCHOOL	00052	Tier III
ADDISON CENTRAL SUPV UNION	5099903	MIDDLEBURY ID #4 SCHOOL	00187	Tier III
ADDISON CENTRAL SUPV UNION	5099903	SHOREHAM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	00288	Tier III
ADDISON NORTHEAST SUPV UNION	5099901	BRISTOL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	00423	Tier III
ADDISON NORTHEAST SUPV UNION	5099901	MOUNT ABRAHAM UHSD #28	00338	Tier II
ADDISON NORTHWEST SUPV UNION	5099902	VERGENNES UESD #44	00349	Tier III
ADDISON RUTLAND SUPV UNION	5099904	FAIR HAVEN GRADE SCHOOL	00126	Tier III

LEA Name	ncesleaid	School Name	ncesschid	Tier Level
ADDISON RUTLAND SUPV UNION	5099904	FAIR HAVEN UHSD #16	00127	Tier II
BARRE SUPERVISORY UNION	5000007	BARRE CITY ELEM/MIDDLE SCHOOL	00055	Tier III
BURLINGTON SUPERVISORY DISTRICT	5099915	BURLINGTON SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL	00063	Tier III
BURLINGTON SUPERVISORY DISTRICT	5099915	C. P. SMITH SCHOOL	00064	Tier III
BURLINGTON SUPERVISORY DISTRICT	5099915	CHAMPLAIN SCHOOL	00065	Tier III
BURLINGTON SUPERVISORY DISTRICT	5099915	EDMUNDS MIDDLE SCHOOL	00066	Tier III
BURLINGTON SUPERVISORY DISTRICT	5099915	H. O. WHEELER SCHOOL	00073	Tier I
BURLINGTON SUPERVISORY DISTRICT	5099915	J. J. FLYNN SCHOOL	00068	Tier III
BURLINGTON SUPERVISORY DISTRICT	5099915	LAWRENCE BARNES SCHOOL	00069	Tier III
BURLINGTON SUPERVISORY DISTRICT	5099915	LYMAN C. HUNT MIDDLE SCHOOL	00070	Tier III
CALEDONIA NORTH SUPV UNION	5099908	BURKE TOWN SCHOOL	00424	Tier III
CALEDONIA NORTH SUPV UNION	5099908	LYNDON TOWN SCHOOL	00436	Tier III
CHITTENDEN EAST SUPV UNION	5099912	CAMELS HUMP MIDDLE USD #17	00399	Tier III
CHITTENDEN SOUTH SUPV UNION	5099914	WILLISTON SCHOOLS	00243	Tier III
COLCHESTER SUPERVISORY DISTRICT	5099907	MALLETTS BAY SCHOOL	00090	Tier III
FRANKLIN CENTRAL SUPV UNION	5099923	ST. ALBANS CITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	00304	Tier III
FRANKLIN NORTHEAST SUPV UNION	5099920	BAKERSFIELD SCHOOL	00009	Tier III
FRANKLIN NORTHEAST SUPV UNION	5099920	BERKSHIRE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	00034	Tier III
FRANKLIN NORTHEAST SUPV UNION	5099920	ENOSBURG FALLS ELEM. SCHOOL	00113	Tier III
FRANKLIN NORTHWEST SUPV UNION	5099921	HIGHGATE SCHOOLS	00434	Tier III
FRANKLIN NORTHWEST SUPV UNION	5099921	MISSISQUOI VALLEY UHSD #7	00195	Tier III
FRANKLIN NORTHWEST SUPV UNION	5099921	SWANTON SCHOOLS	00049	Tier III
FRANKLIN WEST SUPV UNION	5099922	BFA ELEM/ MIDDLE SCHOOL	00206	Tier III
GRAND ISLE SUPERVISORY UNION	5099924	ALBURG COMMUNITY ED CENTER	00004	Tier III
LAMOILLE NORTH SUPV UNION	5099925	HYDE PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	00161	Tier III
LAMOILLE NORTH SUPV UNION	5099925	JOHNSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	00168	Tier I
LAMOILLE NORTH SUPV UNION	5099925	LAMOILLE UHSD #18	00171	Tier II
LAMOILLE SOUTH SUPV UNION	5099926	MORRISTOWN ELEM. SCHOOLS	00438	Tier III
LAMOILLE SOUTH SUPV UNION	5099926	PEOPLES ACADEMY MIDDLE SCHOOL	00157	Tier III
MILTON ID SUPERVISORY DISTRICT	5099910	MILTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	00437	Tier III
NORTH COUNTRY SUPV UNION	5099931	DERBY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	00429	Tier III
NORTH COUNTRY SUPV UNION	5099931	NEWPORT CITY ELEM SCHOOLS	00439	Tier III
NORTH COUNTRY SUPV UNION	5099931	NORTH COUNTRY JR UHSD #22	00470	Tier III
ORANGE NORTH SUPERVISORY UNION	5099929	WILLIAMSTOWN MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL	00380	Tier III

LEA Name	ncesleaid	School Name	ncesschid	Tier Level
RUTLAND CITY SUPERVISORY DISTRICT	5099940	RUTLAND INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL	00075	Tier III
RUTLAND CITY SUPERVISORY DISTRICT	5099940	RUTLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL	00468	Tier III
RUTLAND CITY SUPERVISORY DISTRICT	5099940	RUTLAND NORTHWEST SCHOOL	00275	Tier III
RUTLAND CITY SUPERVISORY DISTRICT	5099940	RUTLAND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL	00271	Tier II
RUTLAND NORTHEAST SUPV UNION	5099936	LOTHROP SCHOOL	00239	Tier III
RUTLAND NORTHEAST SUPV UNION	5099936	NESHOBE SCHOOL	00411	Tier III
RUTLAND SOUTH SUPV UNION	5099933	MILL RIVER USD #40	00344	Tier III
SAINT JOHNSBURY SUPERVISORY DISTRICT	5099911	ST. JOHNSBURY SCHOOL	00181	Tier I
SOUTHWEST VERMONT SUPV UNION	5099905	BENNINGTON ELEM. SCHOOL	00028	Tier III
SOUTHWEST VERMONT SUPV UNION	5099905	MOLLY STARK SCHOOL	00031	Tier III
SOUTHWEST VERMONT SUPV UNION	5099905	POWNALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	00246	Tier III
SPRINGFIELD SUPERVISORY DISTRICT	5099956	PARK STREET SCHOOL	00302	Tier III
SPRINGFIELD SUPERVISORY DISTRICT	5099956	RIVERSIDE SCHOOL	00298	Tier III
SPRINGFIELD SUPERVISORY DISTRICT	5099956	UNION SCHOOL	00303	Tier III
WASHINGTON SOUTH SUPV UNION	5099943	NORTHFIELD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	00440	Tier I
WASHINGTON WEST SUPV UNION	5099942	CROSSETT BROOK MIDDLE SCHOOL USD #	00146	Tier III
WASHINGTON WEST SUPV UNION	5099942	THATCHER BROOK PRIMARY USD	00130	Tier III
WINDHAM NORTHEAST SUPV UNION	5099947	BELLOWS FALLS MIDDLE SCHOOL	00262	Tier III
WINDHAM NORTHEAST SUPV UNION	5099947	WESTMINSTER SCHOOLS	00460	Tier III
WINDHAM SOUTHEAST SUPV UNION	5099948	ACADEMY SCHOOL (BRATTLEBORO)	00079	Tier III
WINDHAM SOUTHEAST SUPV UNION	5099948	BRATTLEBORO AREA MIDDLE SCHOOL UHSD	00485	Tier III
WINDHAM SOUTHEAST SUPV UNION	5099948	GREEN STREET SCHOOL	00061	Tier III
WINDHAM SOUTHEAST SUPV UNION	5099948	PUTNEY CENTRAL SCHOOL	00249	Tier III
WINDSOR SOUTHEAST SUPV UNION	5099952	WINDSOR HIGH SCHOOL	00386	Tier II
WINDSOR SOUTHEAST SUPV UNION	5099952	WINDSOR STATE STREET SCHOOL	00385	Tier III
WINOOSKI SUPERVISORY DISTRICT	5099917	J. F. KENNEDY ELEM. SCHOOL	00388	Tier III
WINOOSKI SUPERVISORY DISTRICT	5099917	WINOOSKI HIGH SCHOOL	00389	Tier I
WINOOSKI SUPERVISORY DISTRICT	5099917	WINOOSKI MIDDLE SCHOOL	00183	Tier III

B. EVALUATION CRITERIA: The following criteria will be used to evaluate the information provided in the LEA's application for a School improvement Grant.

B. Evaluation Criteria:

Part 1

Vermont Department of Education (VTDOE) requires each LEA to address the three requirements listed in Part 1 of

this SEA application in the process of submitting an LEA application for a 1003(g) school improvement grant. The information will be submitted by the LEA as part of the requirements in a letter of intent (see sample in ATTACHMENT A – Letter of Intent) to apply for a school improvement grant. VTDOE school improvement review team will evaluate the information provided by the LEA for requirements 1-3 listed below utilizing the evaluation tool found in Attachment G . The Vermont School Improvement grant review team consists of the following individuals employed by the VTDOE:

- Deputy Commissioner, Education Transformation and Innovation
- Directors, Integrated Support for Learning
- School Improvement Support Team – Educational Support System Consultants, Special Education Consultants, School Improvement Coordinators

Requirement 1: The LEA has analyzed the needs of each Tier I, Tier II and Tier III school identified in the LEA’s application and has selected an intervention model (Tier I and Tier II) or activities (Tier III) for each school.

For all Tier I and II schools, the Vermont Department of Education (VTDOE) will evaluate the LEA’s needs assessment application based on the following criteria:

1) School Assets and Data Analysis:

- a) Overview and assessment of school and community assets as well as needs
- b) Input from staff, public/private partnerships, parents and other community members
 - i) For high schools this includes input from regional career center, postsecondary, non-profit and business partners and assessment of alternate pathways to graduation in the region.
- c) Inclusion of analysis of recent and longitudinal New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) results and other relevant common local assessment system data for all students and for subgroups (demographic categories as well as any subgroup of students relevant to school needs including at minimum, students with disabilities, students eligible for free and reduced lunch, and English language learners)
- d) Inclusion of the following data and summarization of conclusions reached after assessing the data:
 - i. Graduation rates,
 - ii. Drop-out rates,
 - iii. Discipline referrals,
 - iv. School action plan priorities,
 - v. Highly qualified teacher data,
 - vi. Child count by disability category
 - vii. Percent of students with disabilities in the general education classroom more than 80% of the time
 - viii. Number of out of district placements
 - ix. Number of students in “alternative” day placements
 - x. Number of ELL students
 - xi. Number of students eligible for free and reduced lunch
 - xii. Most recent Youth Risk Behavior Survey
- e) Inclusion of a guided self assessment, conducted by the Supervisory Union/District (SU) School Support team (this team must include the superintendent, principal of the school(s), curriculum coordinator and special education coordinator), on *Major Factors for Rapid Change in School Improvement* (See Attachment B – *Major Factors for Rapid Change Self Assessment Tool*, and Attachment C – *A Theory of Action*, Richardson, 2009) and agreement to participate in a comprehensive assessment conducted by an external evaluator of the VTDOE’s choosing to inform school improvement implementation plan development and VTDOE school improvement support team service plan development. If such an assessment has already been conducted, the School Improvement Support Team will assess the scope of that assessment to determine if additional evaluation is warranted.
- f) If a school has an existing school improvement plan and/or plan for restructuring under the Vermont State Accountability System and the related Commissioner’s Required Actions, the School Improvement Support

Team will review this plan with the SU School Support Team to assist them in incorporating new requirements under SIG and any information generated by the guided self assessment. The initial school improvement plan is provided with the application and includes at minimum:

- i) Establishment of self-defined annual achievement goals tied to state accountability measures and achievement for all students and relevant student subgroups.
- ii) Those strategies defined as required actions through the state accountability system.
- iii) Those strategies defined through the selection of one of the required models.
- iv) Other strategies designed to assist in achieving school improvement targets.
- v) A budget and timeline for implementing the plan.

For all Tier III schools, the Vermont Department of Education (VTDOE) will evaluate the LEA's needs assessment application based on the following criteria:

1) School Assets and Data Analysis:

- a) Overview and assessment of school and community assets as well as needs
- b) Input from staff, public/private partnerships, parents and other community members
 - i) For high schools this includes input from regional career center, postsecondary, non-profit and business partners and assessment of alternate pathways to graduation in the region.
- c) Inclusion of analysis of recent and longitudinal New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) results and other relevant common local assessment system data for all students and for subgroups (demographic categories as well as any subgroup of students relevant to school needs including at minimum, students with disabilities, students eligible for free and reduced lunch, and English language learners)
- d) Inclusion of the following data and summarization of conclusions reached after assessing the data:
 - i. Graduation rates,
 - ii. Drop-out rates,
 - iii. Discipline referrals,
 - iv. School action plan priorities,
 - v. Highly qualified teacher data,
 - vi. Child count by disability category
 - vii. Percent of students with disabilities in the general education classroom more than 80% of the time
 - viii. Number of out of district placements
 - ix. Number of students in "alternative" day placements
 - x. Number of ELL students
 - xi. Number of students eligible for free and reduced lunch
 - xii. Most recent Youth Risk Behavior Survey
- e) Inclusion of a guided self assessment, conducted by the SU School Support team and for each school, on *Major Factors for Rapid Change in School Improvement* (See Attachment B – *Major Factors for Rapid Change Self Assessment Tool*, and Attachment C – *A Theory of Action*, Richardson, 2009). For schools that have been in Corrective Action under the state accountability system for 4 years or more, this includes an agreement to participate in an assessment conducted by an external evaluator of the VTDOE's choosing. If such an assessment has already been conducted, the School Improvement Support team will assess the scope of that assessment to determine if additional evaluation is warranted.
- f) If a school has an existing school improvement plan and/or plan for restructuring under the Vermont State Accountability System and the related Commissioner's Required Actions, the School Improvement Support team will review this plan with the SU School Support team and school leadership team to assist them in incorporating any new strategies established by this application, into their plan.
- g) The application reflects consideration of the required and permissible elements as outlined in the Transformation model and addresses which of those strategies it is committed to pursuing with these funds.
- h) The initial school improvement plan is provided with the application and includes at minimum:
 - i) Establishment of self-defined annual achievement goals tied to state accountability measures and

- achievement for all students and relevant student subgroups.
- ii) Those strategies defined as required actions through the state accountability system.
- iii) One of the required elements of the SIG Transformation Model (See Attachment F – SIG Transformation Model Required and Permissible Strategies) as it related to the data analysis and school improvement plan.
- iv) Other strategies designed to assist in achieving school improvement targets.

Tier I and II Schools Only - Selection of an Intervention Model

- 1) Demonstrated consideration of all four intervention models (see Attachment D1 - *Description of the Intervention Models*) using the *LEA Tier I and Tier II School Model Selection Assessment Tool* (Attachment D2) to justify the selected intervention linked to analysis of assessment and other relevant data.**

Based on the needs/self assessment and analysis of data, identify an intervention model (using see Attachment D1) for each Tier I and Tier II school the LEA elects to serve. The justification for the selection of a specific model must be described in a narrative in the Model Selection Tool provided in Attachment D2.

Questions the LEA should consider in the selection of an intervention model are included in the Model Selection Tool (See Attachment D2) – *LEA Tier I and Tier II School Model Selection Assessment Tool*).

Four School Improvement Models approved for Tier I and Tier II schools:

Turnaround Model: Replace the principal and rehire no more than 50% of the staff and grant the new principal sufficient operating flexibility (including staffing, calendars/time and budgeting) to implement fully a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student outcomes.

Restart Model: Convert a school or close and reopen it under a charter school operator, a charter management organization, or an education management organization that has been selected through a rigorous review process.

School Closure: Close a school and enroll the students who attended that school in other schools in the LEA that are higher achieving.

Transformation Model: Implement each of the following strategies: (1) replace the principal and take steps to increase teacher and school leader effectiveness; (2) institute comprehensive instructional reforms; (3) increase learning time and create Community-oriented schools; and (4) provide operational flexibility and sustained support

(Section I.B.1 of 1003(g) allows an SEA to award SIG funds to an LEA for a Tier I or Tier II schools that has implemented in whole or in part, one of the models within the last two years so that the LEA and school can continue or complete the intervention being implemented. For example, if a Tier I or Tier II school has replaced its principal within the last two years, the SEA may award funds to the school's LEA to implement a turnaround model in the school even though the school will not be required to hire another new principal. A school that receives SIG funds in accordance with this flexibility must fully implement the selected model as required by the final requirements. In other words, if the school had been implementing the model only in part, it must use the funds it receives to expand its implementation so that it fully complies with the regulatory requirements. Addendum: the two years referenced with respect to this flexibility are the two years prior to the full implementation of the model in accordance with the notice using SIG funds for which and LEA has complete achievement data. In other words, with respect to the award of FY2009 funds for implementation in the 2010-2011 school year, the "last two years" are the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 school years.) – USED Guidance document March 24, 2010.

Requirement 2: The LEA has demonstrated that it has the capacity to use school improvement funds to provide adequate resources and related support to each Tier I, Tier II and Tier III school identified in the LEA's application in order to implement fully and effectively the selected intervention in each of those schools.

1) Vermont Department of Education will evaluate the LEA's capacity to implement fully and effectively the selected intervention using the following criteria:

- a. Evidence of actions that the LEA/school has already taken related to the required elements of the chosen intervention.
 - i. Evidence should include documentation of progress toward existing school improvement plan strategies that are substantially aligned with required elements of the chosen intervention (e.g., The LEA indicates they have already developed and implemented a consistent annual evaluation system for teachers that is informed by student growth and outcomes (both individual and in the aggregate) in this case the LEA would be required to provide the reviewers the documentation that outlines that system and the progress they have made toward implementation.)
- b. Evidence of actions that the LEA has already taken related to Commissioner's Required Actions under the state accountability system of AYP.
 - i. An end of year report documenting progress on implementing Commissioner's Required actions will be submitted with this application.
- c. Provide a narrative description of current conditions (including barriers) related to the following:
 - i. Board support (e.g., minutes and/or board actions that indicate board support for the application and willingness to direct the school in implementing the forthcoming plan as defined.)
 - ii. Union support (e.g., documentation of local union willingness to include revised evaluation systems in upcoming contracts, or amend existing contracts to include these changes.)
 - iii. Financial capacity beyond SIG/sustainability (e.g., inclusion in budget of matching funds including use of other funding sources to support implementation efforts and sustain practices beyond the life of the grant)
 - iv. Current evaluation practices (e.g., outline of current evaluation system for principals and teachers, including model, frequency of evaluation, etc.)
 - v. Staff capacity/talent (e.g., description of staff experience level, special expertise, highlighting positions/individuals who will be actively engaged in implementing the school improvement plan and working closely with the state School Improvement Support team .)
 - vi. Statewide and regional partnerships (e.g., agreements with ESAs, local agencies, and/or institutes of higher ed,)
 - vii. Allocation of adequate time for teacher collaboration, job embedded professional development (i.e., as described in the LEAs application)
 - viii. Data systems that inform on-going assessment of student progress and instructional practices (e.g., describing current use of systems like Aimsweb, Dibels, SWIS, etc.)
 - ix. Parent and community partner support (i.e., support and engagement of local parent organizations, businesses, agencies and associations in school decision-making and activities.)
 - x. The sufficiency of the budget to implement the selected intervention fully and effectively in each Tier I and Tier II school identified in the LEA's application as well as to support school improvement activities in Tier III schools throughout the period of availability of those funds (taking into account any waiver extending that period received by either the SEA or the LEA). (i.e., reviewers will look to see if the budget includes staffing, consulting, contracts with partners, materials, substitute costs or stipends, costs for transitioning to new or expanded schedules sufficient to sustain improvement activities described during the period of the grant and matching or other funding sources to sustain strategies beyond the life of the grant.)

- 2) **The school will conduct a guided self-assessment of each school using the rubric provided (See Attachment E) to determine capacity and readiness for implementing the school improvement plan.**

Requirement 3: Each LEA intending to apply for school improvement funds will submit a preliminary budget to implement the selected intervention fully and effectively in each Tier I and Tier II school in the application. Further, for each Tier III school an estimate of the funds needed to conduct school improvement activities shall be included in the preliminary budget. The preliminary budget shall cover the period of availability of these funds (SY10-11; SY11-12; and SY12-13) as the VTDOE has applied for a waiver to extend the period of availability of funds. The overall LEA budget must indicate how it will allocate school improvement funds, over a three-year period, among the Tier I, Tier II and Tier III schools it commits to serve.

An LEA serving Tier I and Tier II schools receives priority for funding in the VTDOE grant process. Note that the proposed allocation for each school served depends on the size of the school, the interventions to be carried out and level of benefits provided.

The budget should take into account the following:

1. The number of Tier I and Tier II schools that the LEA commits to serve and the intervention model (turnaround, restart, closure, or transformation) selected for each school.
2. The budget request for each Tier I and Tier II school must be of sufficient size and scope to support full and effective implementation of the selected intervention over a period of three years.
3. For Tier I and Tier II schools, the budget must be planned as a minimum of \$50,000 not to exceed \$2 million per year per school.
4. The LEA may request funding for LEA-level activities that will support the implementation of school intervention models in Tier I and Tier II schools and support school improvement activities, at the school or LEA level, for each Tier III school identified in the LEA's application.
5. The number of Tier III schools that the LEA commits to serve and the services or benefits the LEA plans to provide to these schools over the three-year grant period.

VTDOE will evaluate the LEA's budget using the following criteria:

- Budget aligned to identified needs
- Budget addresses implementation of the plan over the life of the grant (one to three years) and accounts for intensity of need and prioritized actions
- Budget sufficient to carry out planned activities
- Sufficient funds are budgeted for required elements prior to budgeting for permissible activities
- Budgets within the LEA are aligned and support common initiatives across participating schools
- Budget is aligned with other funding sources, e.g. Consolidated Federal Programs (CFP), IDEA, 21C, Perkins

The SEA will evaluate the criterion for the LEA application in the following ways:

The Vermont Department of Education has been restructured to create a multidisciplinary approach to school support and improvement statewide. School Improvement Support teams have been formed to work with schools from the point of identification by the state accountability system through the points of application, action and remediation. This approach emphasizes a consistent point of contact and direction, a multi-disciplinary approach to problem solving and guidance, and a systemic approach to improving instruction and learning for all children but particularly for those underachieving sub-groups that have been identified, including students who live in poverty, students with disabilities,

and English language learners.

A core team of individuals has been identified based on experience and expertise in developing educational support systems, implementing school-wide change models to improve instruction and school culture and climate, and required policy and practice elements for sustaining change efforts at a local level.

This core team will review all LEA applications assess their ability to fulfill the criteria above and the level of commitment articulated below **(in Part 2)** using the following methods:

- Assess the level to which the LEA application has addressed all required criteria.
- Provide technical assistance and guidance around required and permissible activities for use of SIG funds.
- Interview SU School Support team.
- Review past performance in areas of required corrective actions under the state accountability system.
- Assess the level of engagement, understanding, and commitment on the part of district and school based leadership to follow through on commitments tied to receipt of funding.
- Assess ongoing LEA initiatives and activities for alignment with SIG requirements and goals.

Part 2 of the LEA Application

The criteria listed under each element will be used by the SEA to evaluate the LEA's commitment to:

1) Design and implement interventions consistent with the final requirements.

- For Tier I and II schools:
 - One of four interventions has been identified and a rationale for their selection has been adequately described and documented.
 - The application includes the use of a guided self assessment to inform school improvement action planning and plans to complete a comprehensive assessment conducted by an external evaluator to inform continued school improvement plan implementation.
 - All required elements of the selected intervention have been addressed so as to fully and effectively implement the selected model within the three year timeline of the grant.
 - For Tier I and Tier II schools, external coaching capacity (someone not under the supervision of the principal) has been identified to provide intensive technical assistance and guide the implementation process.
- For Tier I, II, and III schools:
 - The application includes the use of a guided self assessment to inform school improvement action planning.
 - The application includes a commitment to work with the state School Improvement Support team in the development and execution of a school improvement implementation plan that assesses and incorporates effective school improvement strategies already under way and includes required (for Tier I and II) and permissible strategies
 - The application includes a commitment to designate local leadership team (SU School Support team) responsible for directing and reporting on the progress of implementing defined elements. This team must include the superintendent, the principal of the school(s), the curriculum coordinator and the special education coordinator.
 - Application reflects school improvement strategies already in progress.
 - Evidence-based practices are selected and plans to implement consider measures necessary to ensure fidelity of implementation. (e.g., the application includes approaches that have a research base reflecting effectiveness in improving instruction in the areas of concern such as mathematics or literacy; the application also includes approaches that provide a systemic model for improving instruction and learning and reflects the preparative and evaluative components of sustainable

implementation such as achieving readiness to implement, communicating progress, evaluating outcomes, and providing supervisory union/district support through funding, allocation of personnel, and time for professional development, collaboration and planning.)

- The application includes a commitment to provide the following required data elements annually:
 - 1.) Number of minutes within the school year
 - 2.) Student participation rate on State assessments in reading/language arts and in mathematics, by student subgroup
 - 3.) Dropout rate
 - 4.) Student attendance rate
 - 5.) Number and percentage of students completing advanced coursework (i.e. AP/IB), early college high schools, or dual enrollment classes
 - 6.) Discipline incidents
 - 7.) Truants
 - 8.) Distribution of teachers by performance level on an LEAs teacher evaluation system (once that system is up and running)
 - 9.) Teacher attendance rate

2) Outline the need for recruitment of external providers in effectively implementing the defined school improvement plans and parameters which will be considered in ensuring quality and fit.

Some recommendations from the *Handbook on Effective Implementation of School Improvement Grants* (Perlman and Redding, eds.; 2010) follow:

- a. Identify unambiguous reasons for hiring an external provider.
- b. Engage stakeholders about the need to hire external providers.
- c. Articulate specific goals for the relationship with the external provider.
- d. Budget adequate funding to support relationship with external provider for duration of contract;
- e. Develop a process for selecting external providers whose experience and qualifications match the specified goals.
- f. Negotiate a contract outlining roles and responsibilities of the external provider as well as the district and relevant schools.
- g. Provide support as needed and appropriate.
- h. Evaluate external provider's progress toward goals.
- i. Define consequences for failure (e.g., termination or modification of contract).

3) LEA agrees to collaborate and cooperate with state organized trainings for Supervisory Union administrators, principals, teachers and paraprofessionals, informational meetings, and trainings provided through the state.

4) Align other resources with the interventions.

- The LEA plan must be comprehensive and systemic in its approach. Reviewers will look to the budget and school improvement plan to assess the alignment and allocation of resources (e.g., personnel, percent of time committed, recognition of and/or effort to assess and realign existing initiatives and funds from other sources to support school improvement goals, refocusing existing professional development and in-service days to support training needs related to improvement, etc.) :
 - Human resources
 - Fiscal resources
 - Time and schedule
 - Existing Initiatives
 - Related activities
 - Partnerships
 - Alignment of PD activities

5) Modify its practices or policies, if necessary, to enable it to implement the interventions fully and effectively.

- The LEA agrees to use an external evaluation and internal review process to identify any current practices or policies that are barriers to a full and effective implementation of the selected intervention and commit to eliminating barriers through the implementation process. This process will also identify areas where a consolidation of focus would benefit the school improvement process (such as multiple committees focusing on similar outcomes – or with no defined outcomes) and work to converge efforts on common goals and outcomes.
- Inclusion of actions to address those barriers in the plan, utilizing the following, as applicable:
 - Board and Union letters of recognition or memorandum of understanding that document commitment to modify or amend current agreements, practices, and procedures to allow full and effective implementation of the transformation model.
 - Agreements for operational flexibility to implement reform at the school level.
 - Evidence of need for waivers to State Board of Education rules, when appropriate.

6) Sustain the reforms after the funding period ends. The LEA must:

- Include strategies that build local capacity and methodologies that ensure interventions are integrated into the culture and routine practice of the school. (e.g., if student discipline and behavior is a significant factor to consider in working to raise achievement levels for students, the plan goes beyond providing individualized interventions and reflects a systemic approach to improving levels of student time on task and participation in the classroom by implementing or reconstituting an evidence based model to address school climate and culture such as Positive Behavioral Supports or Responsive Classroom. These models build local capacity to intervene early and support students within the school community with the least amount of intervention to achieve the greatest result and create sustainability by involving the whole school community in the implementation process.)
- Identify local fiscal and structural support for the interventions where applicable beyond the life of the grant.
- Identify other funding sources that will be used to complement SIG funds received in supporting the implementation of defined strategies. These could include other federal programs, as well as state and local funds and should also highlight funds that will be used to sustain the intervention beyond three-year grant period.
- Plan for induction and mentoring of new staff.
- Create a district level team that examines and reports on achievement levels for all students and subgroups for all schools in the supervisory union on a bi-annual basis. State assessment results are communicated annually to teachers, staff, family and community members and school boards. Appropriate response strategies are incorporated into school action plans.

The SEA will evaluate the LEA commitment to implementation in the following ways:

The State School Improvement review team defined above will review all School Improvement Grant (SIG) applications using the rubric in Attachment G and assess their ability to fulfill the criteria above and the level of commitment articulated below using the following methods:

- Assess the level to which the LEA application has addressed all required criteria.
- Provide technical assistance and guidance around required and permissible activities for use of SIG funds.
- Interview key SU School Support team.
- Review past performance in areas of required corrective actions under the state accountability system.
- Assess the level of engagement, understanding, and commitment on the part of district and school based leadership to follow through on commitments tied to receipt of funding.
- Assess ongoing LEA initiatives and activities for alignment with SIG requirements and goals.

C. CAPACITY: The following criteria will be used to evaluate whether an LEA lacks capacity to implement a school intervention model in each Tier I school.

An LEA that applies for a School Improvement Grant must serve each of its Tier I schools using one of the four school intervention models unless the LEA demonstrates that it lacks sufficient capacity to do so. If an LEA claims it lacks sufficient capacity to serve each Tier I school, the SEA must evaluate the sufficiency of the LEA's claim. Claims of lack of capacity should be scrutinized carefully to ensure that LEAs effectively intervene in as many of their Tier I schools as possible.

The SEA must explain how it will evaluate whether an LEA lacks capacity to implement a school intervention model in each Tier I school. The SEA must also explain what it will do if it determines that an LEA has more capacity than the LEA demonstrates.

At this time, Vermont does not have an LEA with more than one Tier I school.

If a Tier I school chooses not to participate, they continue to be subject to the state accountability system and accompanying Commissioner's Required Actions under the authority of the State Board of Education and Vermont Title 16, V.S.A. § 165. Standards of Quality for Public School: Equal Education Opportunities.

If a Tier I school lacks the capacity to participate, the Vermont School Improvement Support team and office of the Commissioner will provide technical assistance to the Superintendent and local school board to assist them in addressing the areas of insufficient capacity.

Vermont State Board of Education Manual of Rules and Practices – Rule 2575 – School Accountability System Based on Achievement:

Commissioner's Recommendations to the State Board for Schools or LEAs Not Making AYP for the Fourth Consecutive Time - If the school or LEA does not make AYP for the fourth consecutive year in the relevant elements, the Commissioner shall recommend to the State Board actions consistent with state and federal law .

Vermont Department of Education will evaluate the LEA's capacity to implement fully and effectively the selected intervention using the following criteria:

- a) Evidence of actions that the LEA/school has already taken related to the required elements of the chosen intervention.
 - i) Evidence includes documentation of progress toward existing school improvement plan strategies that are substantially aligned with required elements of the chosen intervention (e.g., The LEA indicates they have already developed and implemented a consistent annual evaluation system for teachers that is informed by student growth and outcomes (both individual and in the aggregate.) In this case the LEA would be required to provide the reviewers the documentation that outlines that system and the progress they have made toward implementation.)
- b) Evidence of actions that the LEA has already taken related to Commissioner's Required Actions under the state accountability system of AYP.
 - i) Reviewers will look to the annual reports submitted by the LEA documenting progress made in implementing the Commissioner's Required Actions for each year the LEA has been in corrective action for not making adequate yearly progress (AYP). This review will look specifically to see evidence the LEA has followed through on previous commitments and expected actions and whether or not progress has been made in the areas defined.
- c) Provide a narrative description of current conditions (including barriers) related to the following:
 - i) Board support (e.g., minutes and/or board actions that indicate board support for the application and

willingness to direct the school in implementing the forthcoming plan as defined.)

- ii) Union support (e.g., documentation of local union willingness to include revised evaluation systems in upcoming contracts, or amend existing contracts to include these changes.)
 - iii) Financial capacity beyond SIG/sustainability (e.g., inclusion in budget of matching funds including use of other funding sources to support implementation efforts and sustain practices beyond the life of the grant)
 - iv) Current evaluation practices (e.g., outline of current evaluation system for principals and teachers, including model, frequency of evaluation, etc.)
 - v) Staff capacity/talent (e.g., description of staff experience level, special expertise, highlighting positions/individuals who will be actively engaged in implementing the school improvement plan and working closely with the state School Improvement Support team.)
 - vi) Statewide and regional partnerships (e.g., agreements with ESAs, local agencies, and/or institutes of higher education.)
 - vii) Allocation of adequate time for teacher collaboration, job embedded professional development (i.e., as described in the LEAs application)
 - viii) Data systems that inform on-going assessment of student progress and instructional practices (e.g., describing current use of systems like Aimsweb, Dibels, SWIS, etc.)
 - ix) Parent and community partner support (i.e., support and engagement of local parent organizations, businesses, agencies and associations in school decision-making and activities.)
 - x) The sufficiency of the budget to implement the selected intervention fully and effectively in each Tier I and Tier II school identified in the LEA's application as well as to support school improvement activities in Tier III schools throughout the period of availability of those funds (taking into account any waiver extending that period received by either the SEA or the LEA). (i.e., reviewers will look to see if the budget includes staffing, consulting, contracts with partners, materials, substitute costs or stipends, costs for transitioning to new or expanded schedules sufficient to sustain improvement activities described during the period of the grant and matching or other funding sources to sustain strategies beyond the life of the grant.)
- d) **The superintendent will conduct a guided self-assessment of each school using the rubric provided (See Attachment E), and agrees to have the external consultant identified in the needs assessment above conduct an objective assessment of the same should the LEA be funded for a school improvement plan under this grant.** If the school has already conducted such an assessment, the School Improvement Support Team will assess the scope of that assessment to determine if additional evaluation is necessary. If a school has an existing school improvement plan and/or plan for restructuring under the Vermont State Accountability System and the related Commissioner's Required Actions, the School Improvement Support Team will review this plan with the Superintendent and proposed SU School Support Team to assist them in incorporating new requirements under SIG as established by this application, into their plan.

The LEA must serve their Tier I school before being eligible for funds for any Tier II or Tier III school. Any LEA that claims it does not have capacity to do so would be subject to an audit by an external provider selected by the SEA.

Any LEA refusing to serve their Tier I school would still be subject to the state accountability system and would be subjected to Commissioner's Required Actions as defined in V.S.A. Title 16.

D. DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION:

1) The process and timeline for approving LEA applications.

- The Department will review applications, utilizing other stakeholders in an advisory capacity when indicated. A pre-application technical assistance meeting will be provided to all applicants. The VT DOE School Improvement Support team will provide more intensive technical assistance to Tier I and II applicants, as needed, to provide optimal conditions for success. This will include an on-site visit and an interview with LEA administrators and the school principal.
- Currently, some LEAs have begun work based on the draft State SIG application. The finalized application will be released to LEAs within three business days of approval from the USED.
- Applications will be accepted at any time between the date of USED approval and June 15th with priority

review for supervisory unions/districts with Tier I and II schools. Because funds must be prioritized to Tier I and II schools and the VTDOE desires to make funding available to all Tier I, II and III schools as soon as practicable, Superintendents with Tier I and II schools in their supervisory union/district are required to submit a letter of intent to participate no later than May 15th, with a full application due no later than June 15, 2010. Applications will be approved and funds made available on a rolling basis for Tier I and II schools (and Tier III schools in LEAs with Tier I and II schools.) A determination on all applications (Tier I, II and III) will be made no later than June 30, 2010.

- Funds will become available as applications are approved.
- Additional applications from Tier III schools will be permitted as funds allow beyond the June 15th deadline.

2) LEA Monitoring and the process for reviewing an LEA's annual goals for student achievement for its Tier I, II and III schools.

- The SEA School Implementation Teams (defined above) working with Tier I, II, and III schools will review student achievement scores annually with the LEA implementation team.
- Progress toward School Improvement Grant Implementation Plan goals will be assessed and reported quarterly by the LEA implementation team.
- Progress toward School Improvement Grant Implementation Plan goals will be assessed and reported bi-annually by the SEA School Support team working with that LEA.
- Additional fidelity measures and evaluations including self evaluations will be used in determining progress toward implementation as is indicated by the selected intervention.
- Intensive technical assistance will be provided by the SEA school support coach on at minimum a monthly basis for Tier I and II schools and a quarterly basis for Tier III schools. This intensive technical assistance may include site visits, systems change guidance, support and training, implementation coaching, and fidelity checks that may include self-assessments as well as external reviews including interviews with students, faculty and administrative leaders, parents and community members.
- On-going fiscal monitoring through review of expenditure reports and fund requests will be conducted in tandem by the SEA School Support Coach and financial office.

3) How the SEA will determine whether to renew an LEA's School Improvement Grant if one or more Tier I, II, III schools in the LEA are not meeting those goals and making progress on the leading indicators in section III of the final requirements.

- VT DOE staff will review LEA data provided for achievement and leading indicators and will require revisions to the application as necessary.
- VT DOE staff will review local formative and summative student data in the areas of mathematics and language arts.
- VT DOE will also review the LEA's progress towards goals prioritizing completion of required activities for Tier I and II schools as a measure for determining continued funding.
- LEA participation in SEA school improvement events, training, and reporting; communication and collaboration with SEA School Support Coaches will also be considered in determinations for continued funding.

4) How the SEA will determine whether to renew an LEA's School Improvement Grant if one or more Tier III schools in the LEA are not meeting those goals.

- VT DOE staff will review LEA data provided for achievement and leading indicators and will require revisions to the application as necessary.
- VT DOE staff will review local formative and summative student data in the areas of mathematics and language arts.
- VT DOE will also review the LEA's progress towards goals prioritizing completion of required activities for Tier I and II schools as a measure for determining continued funding.
- LEA participation in SEA school improvement events, training, and reporting; communication and collaboration with SEA School Support Coaches will also be considered in determinations for continued funding.

5) If the SEA intends to take over any Tier I or Tier II schools, identify those schools and indicate the school intervention model the SEA will implement in each school.

- The SEA does not intend to take over any Tier I, II or III schools at this time.

6) The SEA will monitor any LEA that receives a school improvement grant for a Tier I or Tier II school as described below:

- The SEA School Implementation Teams (defined above) working with Tier I, II, and III schools will review student achievement scores annually with the LEA implementation team.
- Progress toward School Improvement Grant Implementation Plan goals will be assessed and reported quarterly by the LEA implementation team.
- Progress toward School Improvement Grant Implementation Plan goals will be assessed and reported bi-annually by the SEA School Support team working with that LEA.
- Additional fidelity measures and evaluations including self evaluations will be used in determining progress toward implementation as is indicated by the selected intervention.
- Intensive technical assistance will be provided by the SEA school support coach on at minimum a monthly basis for Tier I and II schools and a quarterly basis for Tier III schools. This intensive technical assistance may include site visits, systems change guidance, support and training, implementation coaching, and fidelity checks that may include self-assessments as well as external reviews including interviews with students, faculty and administrative leaders, parents and community members.
- On-going fiscal monitoring through review of expenditure reports and fund requests will be conducted in tandem by the SEA School Support Coach and financial office.

7) The SEA will use the following criteria to prioritize School Improvement Grants to LEAs if the SEA does not have sufficient school improvement funds to serve all eligible schools for which each LEA applies.

- Funds will be prioritized first to Tier I and Tier II schools.
- Funds for Tier III schools will be prioritized to those LEAs with Tier I or Tier II schools in this order –
 - 1) LEAs serving Tier I and/or Tier II schools who also have Tier III schools.
 - 2) LEAs serving Tier III schools but having no Tier I or Tier II schools to serve –
 - Based on the strength of their application including their commitment to using elements of the transformation model in their school improvement plan, their capacity and evidence of follow through on current and past school improvement efforts.
 - 3) LEAs with Tier II and Tier III schools but choosing not to serve Tier II schools.
 - 4) LEAs with Tier I and Tier III schools who choose not to serve Tier I schools receive no funds.

E. ASSURANCES: By submitting this application, the SEA assures that it will:

- X** Comply with the final requirements and ensure that each LEA carries out its responsibilities.
- X** Award each approved LEA a School Improvement Grant in an amount that is of sufficient size and scope to implement the selected intervention in each Tier I and Tier II school that the SEA approves the LEA to serve.
- X** Apportion its school improvement funds in order to make grants to LEAs, as applicable, that are renewable for the length of the period of availability, taking into account any waivers that may have been requested and received by the SEA or an individual LEA to extend the period of availability.
- X** Carry over 25 percent of its FY 2009 school improvement funds, combine those funds with FY 2010 school improvement funds, and award those funds to eligible LEAs consistent with the final requirements if not every Tier I school in the State receives FY 2009 school improvement funds to implement a school improvement model in the 2010-2011 school year (unless the SEA does not have sufficient school improvement funds to serve every Tier I school in the State).
- X** Ensure, if the SEA is participating in the Department's differentiated accountability pilot, that its LEAs will use school improvement funds consistent with the final requirements.
- X** Monitor each LEA's implementation of the interventions supported with school improvement funds.
- X** To the extent a Tier I or Tier II school implementing the restart model becomes a charter school LEA,

hold the charter school operator or charter management organization accountable, or ensure that the charter school authorizer holds the respective entity accountable, for meeting the final requirements.

- X** Post on its Web site, within 30 days of awarding School Improvement Grants, all final LEA applications and a summary of the grants that includes the following information: name and NCES identification number of each LEA awarded a grant; amount of the grant; name and NCES identification number of each school to be served; and type of intervention to be implemented in each Tier I and Tier II school.
- X** Report the specific school-level data required in section III of the final requirements.

F. SEA RESERVATION: The SEA will use its reserve for the following activities related to administration, evaluation and technical assistance:

Because the state is committed to creating a statewide system of support to improve instruction and learning outcomes for all Vermont students, a limited portion of funds will be used to support school improvement support coordinator positions.

The majority of the funds will be used to build capacity and sustainability:

- Provide training to state school improvement support coordinators and school improvement coaches at a regional and local level.
- Develop capacity through use of regional ESA's (Education Service Agencies) to support LEAs in this work on an ongoing basis.
- Engage stakeholders and supporting partners in developing a statewide system to improve instruction and learning.
- Provide comprehensive evaluations to inform planning and implementation for Tier I & II schools and Tier III schools who have been in Corrective Action in the state system for 4 years or more.
- Develop resource materials, electronic and otherwise to support instructional improvement, systems evaluation, and related school improvement networks.
- Engage the Center on Improvement and New England Comprehensive Center in working with the state of Vermont to develop a statewide system of support for improving instruction and learning outcomes.

G. CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS:

- X** The SEA has consulted with its Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in its application.

The SEA may also consult with other stakeholders that have an interest in its application.

- X** The SEA has consulted with other relevant stakeholders, including Vermont National Education Association (NT NEA), VT Principals Association, VT Superintendents Association.

H. WAIVERS:

Vermont requests a waiver of the requirements it has listed below. These waivers would allow any local educational agency (LEA) in the State that receives a School Improvement Grant to use those funds in accordance with the final requirements for School Improvement Grants and the LEA's application for a grant.

The State believes that the requested waiver(s) will increase the quality of instruction for students and improve the academic achievement of students in Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools by enabling an LEA to use more effectively the school improvement funds to implement one of the four school intervention models in its Tier I or Tier II schools and to carry out school improvement activities in its Tier III schools. The four school intervention models are specifically designed to raise substantially the achievement of students in the State's Tier I and Tier II schools.

X Waive section 421(b) of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. § 1225(b)) to extend the period of availability of school improvement funds for the SEA and all of its LEAs to September 30, 2013.

The State assures that it will ensure that any LEA that chooses to implement one or more of these waivers will comply with section II.A.8 of the final requirements.

The State assures that it will permit an LEA to implement the waiver(s) only if the LEA receives a School Improvement Grant and requests to implement the waiver(s) in its application. As such, the LEA may only implement the waiver(s) in Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools, as applicable, included in its application.

The State assures that, prior to submitting this request in its School Improvement Grant application, the State provided all LEAs in the State that are eligible to receive a School Improvement Grant with notice and a reasonable opportunity to comment on this request and has attached a copy of that notice as well as copies of any comments it received from LEAs. The State also assures that it provided notice and information regarding this waiver request to the public in the manner in which the State customarily provides such notice and information to the public (*e.g.*, by publishing a notice in the newspaper; by posting information on its Web site) and has attached a copy of, or link to, that notice.

The State assures that, if it is granted one or more of the waivers requested above, it will submit to the U.S. Department of Education a report that sets forth the name and NCES District Identification Number for each LEA implementing a waiver, including which specific waivers each LEA is implementing.

LEA APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

In Vermont, for the purposes of the School Improvement Grant, when we refer to the LEA, we are referring to the Supervisory Union/District.

A. SCHOOLS TO BE SERVED: An LEA must include the following information with respect to the schools it will serve with a School Improvement Grant.

An LEA must identify each Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III school the LEA commits to serve and identify the model that the LEA will use in each Tier I and Tier II school.

SCHOOL NAME	NCES ID #	TIER I	TIER II	TIER III	INTERVENTION (TIER I AND II ONLY)			
					turnaround	restart	closure	transformation

Note: An LEA that has nine or more Tier I and Tier II schools may not implement the transformation model in more than 50 percent of those schools.

B. DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION: An LEA must include the following information in its application for a School Improvement Grant.

- (1) For each Tier I and Tier II school that the LEA commits to serve, the LEA must demonstrate that—
 - The LEA has analyzed the needs of each school and selected an intervention for each school; and
 - The LEA has the capacity to use school improvement funds to provide adequate resources and related support to each Tier I and Tier II school identified in the LEA’s application in order to implement, fully and effectively, the required activities of the school intervention model it has selected.
- (2) If the LEA is not applying to serve each Tier I school, the LEA must explain why it lacks capacity to serve each Tier I school.
- (3) The LEA must describe actions it has taken, or will take, to—
 - Design and implement interventions consistent with the final requirements;
 - Recruit, screen, and select external providers, if applicable, to ensure their quality;
 - Align other resources with the interventions;
 - Modify its practices or policies, if necessary, to enable its schools to implement the interventions fully and effectively; and
 - Sustain the reforms after the funding period ends.
- (4) The LEA must include a timeline delineating the steps it will take to implement the selected intervention in each Tier I and Tier II school identified in the LEA’s application.
- (5) The LEA must describe the annual goals for student achievement on the State’s assessments in both reading/language arts and mathematics that it has established in order to monitor its Tier I and Tier II schools that receive school improvement funds.

- (6) For each Tier III school the LEA commits to serve, the LEA must identify the services the school will receive or the activities the school will implement.
- (7) The LEA must describe the goals it has established (subject to approval by the SEA) in order to hold accountable its Tier III schools that receive school improvement funds.
- (8) As appropriate, the LEA must consult with relevant stakeholders regarding the LEA's application and implementation of school improvement models in its Tier I and Tier II schools.

TO MEET REQUIREMENT (1) ABOVE:

Analyze the needs of each Tier I, Tier II and Tier III school identified in the application and selected an intervention model (Tier I and Tier II) or activities (Tier III) for each school.

The Vermont Department of Education will evaluate the LEA's needs assessment application based on the following criteria:

1) School Assets and Data Analysis:

- a) Overview and assessment of school and community assets as well as needs
- b) Input from staff, public/private partnerships, parents and other community members
 - i) For high schools this includes input from regional career center, postsecondary, non-profit and business partners and assessment of alternate pathways to graduation in the region.
- c) Inclusion of analysis of recent and longitudinal New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) results and other relevant common local assessment system data for all students and for subgroups (demographic categories as well as any subgroup of students relevant to school needs including at minimum, students with disabilities, students eligible for free and reduced lunch, and English language learners)
- d) Inclusion of the following data and summarization of conclusions reached after assessing the data:
 - i. Graduation rates,
 - ii. Drop-out rates,
 - iii. Discipline referrals,
 - iv. School action plan priorities,
 - v. Highly qualified teacher data,
 - vi. Child count by disability category
 - vii. Percent of students with disabilities in the general education classroom more than 80% of the time
 - viii. Number of out of district placements
 - ix. Number of students in "alternative" day placements
 - x. Number of ELL students
 - xi. Number of students eligible for free and reduced lunch
 - xii. Most recent Youth Risk Behavior Survey
- e) Inclusion of a guided self assessment, conducted by the Supervisory Union/District (SU) School Support team (this team must include the superintendent, principal of the school(s), curriculum coordinator and special education coordinator), on *Major Factors for Rapid Change in School Improvement* (See Attachment B – *Major Factors for Rapid Change Self Assessment Tool*, and Attachment C – *A Theory of Action*, Richardson, 2009) and agreement to participate in a comprehensive assessment conducted by an external evaluator of the VTDOE's choosing to inform school improvement implementation plan development and VTDOE school improvement support team service plan development. If such an assessment has already been conducted, the School Improvement Support Team will assess the scope of that assessment to determine if additional evaluation is warranted.
- f) If a school has an existing school improvement plan and/or plan for restructuring under the Vermont State

Accountability System and the related Commissioner's Required Actions, the School Improvement Support Team will review this plan with the SU School Support Team to assist them in incorporating new requirements under SIG and any information generated by the guided self assessment. The initial school improvement plan is provided with the application and includes at minimum:

- i) Establishment of self-defined annual achievement goals tied to state accountability measures and achievement for all students and relevant student subgroups.
- ii) Those strategies defined as required actions through the state accountability system.
- iii) Those strategies defined through the selection of one of the required models.
- iv) Other strategies designed to assist in achieving school improvement targets.
- v) A budget and timeline for implementing the plan.

For all Tier III schools, the Vermont Department of Education (VTDOE) will evaluate the LEA's needs assessment application based on the following criteria:

2) School Assets and Data Analysis:

- a) Overview and assessment of school and community assets as well as needs
- b) Input from staff, public/private partnerships, parents and other community members
 - i) For high schools this includes input from regional career center, postsecondary, non-profit and business partners and assessment of alternate pathways to graduation in the region.
- c) Inclusion of analysis of recent and longitudinal New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) results and other relevant common local assessment system data for all students and for subgroups (demographic categories as well as any subgroup of students relevant to school needs including at minimum, students with disabilities, students eligible for free and reduced lunch, and English language learners)
- d) Inclusion of the following data and summarization of conclusions reached after assessing the data:
 - i. Graduation rates,
 - ii. Drop-out rates,
 - iii. Discipline referrals,
 - iv. School action plan priorities,
 - v. Highly qualified teacher data,
 - vi. Child count by disability category
 - vii. Percent of students with disabilities in the general education classroom more than 80% of the time
 - viii. Number of out of district placements
 - ix. Number of students in "alternative" day placements
 - x. Number of ELL students
 - xi. Number of students eligible for free and reduced lunch
 - xii. Most recent Youth Risk Behavior Survey
- e) Inclusion of a guided self assessment, conducted by the SU School Support team and for each school, on *Major Factors for Rapid Change in School Improvement* (See Attachment B – *Major Factors for Rapid Change Self Assessment Tool*, and Attachment C – *A Theory of Action*, Richardson, 2009). For schools that have been in Corrective Action under the state accountability system for 4 years or more, this includes an agreement to participate in an assessment conducted by an external evaluator of the VTDOE's choosing. If such an assessment has already been conducted, the School Improvement Support team will assess the scope of that assessment to determine if additional evaluation is warranted.
- f) If a school has an existing school improvement plan and/or plan for restructuring under the Vermont State Accountability System and the related Commissioner's Required Actions, the School Improvement Support team will review this plan with the SU School Support team and school leadership team to assist them in incorporating any new strategies established by this application, into their plan.
- g) The application reflects consideration of the required and permissible elements as outlined in the Transformation model and addresses which of those strategies it is committed to pursuing with these funds.
- h) The initial school improvement plan is provided with the application and includes at minimum:

- i) Establishment of self-defined annual achievement goals tied to state accountability measures and achievement for all students and relevant student subgroups.
- ii) Those strategies defined as required actions through the state accountability system.
- iii) One of the required elements of the SIG Transformation Model (See Attachment F – SIG Transformation Model Required and Permissible Strategies) as it related to the data analysis and school improvement plan.
- iv) Other strategies designed to assist in achieving school improvement targets.

Tier I and II Schools Only - Selection of an Intervention Model

- 1) Demonstrated consideration of all four intervention models (see Attachment D1 - *Description of the Intervention Models*) using the *LEA Tier I and Tier II School Model Selection Assessment Tool* (Attachment D2) to justify the selected intervention linked to analysis of assessment and other relevant data.**

Based on the needs/self assessment and analysis of data, identify an intervention model (using see Attachment D1) for each Tier I and Tier II school the LEA elects to serve. The justification for the selection of a specific model must be described in a narrative in the Model Selection Tool provided in Attachment D2.

Questions the LEA should consider in the selection of an intervention model are included in the Model Selection Tool (See Attachment D2) – *LEA Tier I and Tier II School Model Selection Assessment Tool*).

Four School Improvement Models approved for Tier I and Tier II schools:

Turnaround Model: Replace the principal and rehire no more than 50% of the staff and grant the new principal sufficient operating flexibility (including staffing, calendars/time and budgeting) to implement fully a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student outcomes.

Restart Model: Convert a school or close and reopen it under a charter school operator, a charter management organization, or an education management organization that has been selected through a rigorous review process.

School Closure: Close a school and enroll the students who attended that school in other schools in the LEA that are higher achieving.

Transformation Model: Implement each of the following strategies: (1) replace the principal and take steps to increase teacher and school leader effectiveness; (2) institute comprehensive instructional reforms; (3) increase learning time and create Community-oriented schools; and (4) provide operational flexibility and sustained support

(Section I.B.1 of 1003(g) allows an SEA to award SIG funds to an LEA for a Tier I or Tier II schools that has implemented in whole or in part, one of the models within the last two years so that the LEA and school can continue or complete the intervention being implemented. For example, if a Tier I or Tier II school has replaced its principal within the last two years, the SEA may award funds to the school's LEA to implement a turnaround model in the school even though the school will not be required to hire another new principal. A school that receives SIG funds in accordance with this flexibility must fully implement the selected model as required by the final requirements. In other words, if the school had been implementing the model only in part, it must use the funds it receives to expand its implementation so that it fully complies with the regulatory requirements. Addendum: the two years referenced with respect to this flexibility are the two years prior to the full implementation of the model in accordance with the notice using SIG funds for which and LEA has complete achievement data. In other words, with respect to the award of FY2009 funds for implementation in the 2010-2011 school year, the "last two years" are the

Requirement 2: The LEA has demonstrated that it has the capacity to use school improvement funds to provide adequate resources and related support to each Tier I, Tier II and Tier III school identified in the LEA's application in order to implement fully and effectively the selected intervention in each of those schools.

1) Vermont Department of Education will evaluate the LEA's capacity to implement fully and effectively the selected intervention using the following criteria:

- a. Evidence of actions that the LEA/school has already taken related to the required elements of the chosen intervention.
 - i. Evidence should include documentation of progress toward existing school improvement plan strategies that are substantially aligned with required elements of the chosen intervention (e.g., The LEA indicates they have already developed and implemented a consistent annual evaluation system for teachers that is informed by student growth and outcomes (both individual and in the aggregate) in this case the LEA would be required to provide the reviewers the documentation that outlines that system and the progress they have made toward implementation.)
- b. Evidence of actions that the LEA has already taken related to Commissioner's Required Actions under the state accountability system of AYP.
 - i. An end of year report documenting progress on implementing Commissioner's Required actions will be submitted with this application.
- c. Provide a narrative description of current conditions (including barriers) related to the following:
 - i. Board support (e.g., minutes and/or board actions that indicate board support for the application and willingness to direct the school in implementing the forthcoming plan as defined.)
 - ii. Union support (e.g., documentation of local union willingness to include revised evaluation systems in upcoming contracts, or amend existing contracts to include these changes.)
 - iii. Financial capacity beyond SIG/sustainability (e.g., inclusion in budget of matching funds including use of other funding sources to support implementation efforts and sustain practices beyond the life of the grant)
 - iv. Current evaluation practices (e.g., outline of current evaluation system for principals and teachers, including model, frequency of evaluation, etc.)
 - v. Staff capacity/talent (e.g., description of staff experience level, special expertise, highlighting positions/individuals who will be actively engaged in implementing the school improvement plan and working closely with the state School Improvement Support team .)
 - vi. Statewide and regional partnerships (e.g., agreements with ESAs, local agencies, and/or institutes of higher ed,)
 - vii. Allocation of adequate time for teacher collaboration, job embedded professional development (i.e., as described in the LEAs application)
 - viii. Data systems that inform on-going assessment of student progress and instructional practices (e.g., describing current use of systems like Aimsweb, Dibels, SWIS, etc.)
 - ix. Parent and community partner support (i.e., support and engagement of local parent organizations, businesses, agencies and associations in school decision-making and activities.)
 - x. The sufficiency of the budget to implement the selected intervention fully and effectively in each Tier I and Tier II school identified in the LEA's application as well as to support school improvement activities in Tier III schools throughout the period of availability of those funds (taking into account any waiver extending that period received by either the SEA or the LEA). (i.e., reviewers will look to see if the budget includes staffing, consulting, contracts with partners, materials, substitute costs or stipends, costs for transitioning to new or expanded schedules sufficient to sustain improvement activities described during the period of the grant and matching or other funding sources to sustain strategies beyond the life of the grant.)

2) The school will conduct a guided self-assessment of each school using the rubric provided (See Attachment E) to determine capacity and readiness for implementing the school improvement plan.

TO MEET REQUIREMENT 2 ABOVE:

Vermont has no LEA with more than one Tier I school therefore this is not applicable.

TO MEET REQUIREMENT 3 ABOVE:

The LEA must describe actions it has taken, or will take, to—

- Design and implement interventions consistent with the final requirements;
- Recruit, screen, and select external providers, if applicable, to ensure their quality;
- Align other resources with the interventions;
- Modify its practices or policies, if necessary, to enable its schools to implement the interventions fully and effectively; and
- Sustain the reforms after the funding period ends.

1) Design and implement interventions consistent with the final requirements.

- For Tier I and II schools:
 - One of four interventions has been identified and a rationale for their selection has been adequately described and documented.
 - The application includes the use of a guided self assessment to inform school improvement action planning and plans to complete a comprehensive assessment conducted by an external evaluator to inform continued school improvement plan implementation.
 - All required elements of the selected intervention have been addressed so as to fully and effectively implement the selected model within the three year timeline of the grant.
 - For Tier I and Tier II schools, external coaching capacity (someone not under the supervision of the principal) has been identified to provide intensive technical assistance and guide the implementation process.
- For Tier I, II, and III schools:
 - The application includes the use of a guided self assessment to inform school improvement action planning.
 - The application includes a commitment to work with the state School Improvement Support team in the development and execution of a school improvement implementation plan that assesses and incorporates effective school improvement strategies already under way and includes required (for Tier I and II) and permissible strategies
 - The application includes a commitment to designate local leadership team (SU School Support team) responsible for directing and reporting on the progress of implementing defined elements. This team must include the superintendent, the principal of the school(s), the curriculum coordinator and the special education coordinator.
 - Application reflects school improvement strategies already in progress.
 - Evidence-based practices are selected and plans to implement consider measures necessary to ensure fidelity of implementation. (e.g., the application includes approaches that have a research base reflecting effectiveness in improving instruction in the areas of concern such as mathematics or literacy; the application also includes approaches that provide a systemic model for improving instruction and learning and reflects the preparative and evaluative components of sustainable implementation such as achieving readiness to implement, communicating progress, evaluating

outcomes, and providing supervisory union/district support through funding, allocation of personnel, and time for professional development, collaboration and planning.)

- The application includes a commitment to provide the following required data elements annually:
 - 1.) Number of minutes within the school year
 - 2.) Student participation rate on State assessments in reading/language arts and in mathematics, by student subgroup
 - 3.) Dropout rate
 - 4.) Student attendance rate
 - 5.) Number and percentage of students completing advanced coursework (i.e. AP/IB), early college high schools, or dual enrollment classes
 - 6.) Discipline incidents
 - 7.) Truants
 - 8.) Distribution of teachers by performance level on an LEAs teacher evaluation system (once that system is up and running)
 - 9.) Teacher attendance rate

2) Outline the need for recruitment of external providers in effectively implementing the defined school improvement plans and parameters which will be considered in ensuring quality and fit.

Some recommendations from the *Handbook on Effective Implementation of School Improvement Grants* (Perlman and Redding, eds.; 2010) follow:

- a. Identify unambiguous reasons for hiring an external provider.
- b. Engage stakeholders about the need to hire external providers.
- c. Articulate specific goals for the relationship with the external provider.
- d. Budget adequate funding to support relationship with external provider for duration of contract;
- e. Develop a process for selecting external providers whose experience and qualifications match the specified goals.
- f. Negotiate a contract outlining roles and responsibilities of the external provider as well as the district and relevant schools.
- g. Provide support as needed and appropriate.
- h. Evaluate external provider's progress toward goals.
- i. Define consequences for failure (e.g., termination or modification of contract).

3) LEA agrees to collaborate and cooperate with state organized trainings for Supervisory Union administrators, principals, teachers and paraprofessionals, informational meetings, and trainings provided through the state.

4) Align other resources with the interventions.

- The LEA plan must be comprehensive and systemic in its approach. Reviewers will look to the budget and school improvement plan to assess the alignment and allocation of resources (e.g., personnel, percent of time committed, recognition of and/or effort to assess and realign existing initiatives and funds from other sources to support school improvement goals, refocusing existing professional development and in-service days to support training needs related to improvement, etc.) :
 - Human resources
 - Fiscal resources
 - Time and schedule
 - Existing Initiatives
 - Related activities
 - Partnerships
 - Alignment of PD activities

5) Modify its practices or policies, if necessary, to enable it to implement the interventions fully and

effectively.

- The LEA agrees to use an external evaluation and internal review process to identify any current practices or policies that are barriers to a full and effective implementation of the selected intervention and commit to eliminating barriers through the implementation process. This process will also identify areas where a consolidation of focus would benefit the school improvement process (such as multiple committees focusing on similar outcomes – or with no defined outcomes) and work to converge efforts on common goals and outcomes.
- Inclusion of actions to address those barriers in the plan, utilizing the following, as applicable:
 - Board and Union letters of recognition or memorandum of understanding that document commitment to modify or amend current agreements, practices, and procedures to allow full and effective implementation of the transformation model.
 - Agreements for operational flexibility to implement reform at the school level.
 - Evidence of need for waivers to State Board of Education rules, when appropriate.

6) Sustain the reforms after the funding period ends. The LEA must:

- Include strategies that build local capacity and methodologies that ensure interventions are integrated into the culture and routine practice of the school. (e.g., if student discipline and behavior is a significant factor to consider in working to raise achievement levels for students, the plan goes beyond providing individualized interventions and reflects a systemic approach to improving levels of student time on task and participation in the classroom by implementing or reconstituting an evidence based model to address school climate and culture such as Positive Behavioral Supports or Responsive Classroom. These models build local capacity to intervene early and support students within the school community with the least amount of intervention to achieve the greatest result and create sustainability by involving the whole school community in the implementation process.)
- Identify local fiscal and structural support for the interventions where applicable beyond the life of the grant.
- Identify other funding sources that will be used to complement SIG funds received in supporting the implementation of defined strategies. These could include other federal programs, as well as state and local funds and should also highlight funds that will be used to sustain the intervention beyond three-year grant period.
- Plan for induction and mentoring of new staff.
- Create a district level team that examines and reports on achievement levels for all students and subgroups for all schools in the supervisory union on a bi-annual basis. State assessment results are communicated annually to teachers, staff, family and community members and school boards. Appropriate response strategies are incorporated into school action plans.

TO MEET REQUIREMENTS (4) ABOVE –

The LEA must include a timeline delineating the steps it will take to implement the selected intervention in each Tier I and Tier II school identified in the LEA's application.

TO MEET REQUIREMENT (5) ABOVE –

In its application and school improvement implementation plan, the LEA must articulate annual goals (subject to the approval of the SEA) for 2010-2013 for student achievement on the State's assessments in both reading/language arts and mathematics that it has established in order to monitor its Tier I and Tier II schools that receive school improvement funds.

TO MEET REQUIREMENT (6) ABOVE -

For each Tier III school the LEA commits to serve, the LEA must identify the services the school will receive or the

activities the school will implement as defined in the design section above.

TO MEET REQUIREMENT (7) ABOVE –

The LEA must describe the goals it has established (subject to approval by the SEA) in order to hold accountable its Tier III schools that receive school improvement funds.

TO MEET REQUIREMENT (8) ABOVE -

As appropriate, the LEA must consult with relevant stakeholders regarding the LEA's application and implementation of school improvement models in its Tier I and Tier II schools.

C. BUDGET: An LEA must include a budget that indicates the amount of school improvement funds the LEA will use each year in each Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III school it commits to serve.

The LEA must provide a budget that indicates the amount of school improvement funds the LEA will use each year to—

- Implement the selected model in each Tier I and Tier II school it commits to serve;
- Conduct LEA-level activities designed to support implementation of the selected school intervention models in the LEA's Tier I and Tier II schools; and
- Support school improvement activities, at the school or LEA level, for each Tier III school identified in the LEA's application.

Note: An LEA's budget must cover the period of availability, including any extension granted through a waiver, and be of sufficient size and scope to implement the selected school intervention model in each Tier I and Tier II school the LEA commits to serve.

An LEA's budget for each year may not exceed the number of Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools it commits to serve multiplied by \$2,000,000.

D. ASSURANCES: An LEA must include the following assurances in its application for a School Improvement Grant.

The LEA must assure that it will—

- (1) Use its School Improvement Grant to implement fully and effectively an intervention in each Tier I and Tier II school that the LEA commits to serve consistent with the final requirements;
- (2) Establish annual goals for student achievement on the State's assessments in both reading/language arts and mathematics and measure progress on the leading indicators in section III of the final requirements in order to monitor each Tier I and Tier II school that it serves with school improvement funds, and establish goals

(approved by the SEA) to hold accountable its Tier III schools that receive school improvement funds;

- (3) If it implements a restart model in a Tier I or Tier II school, include in its contract or agreement terms and provisions to hold the charter operator, charter management organization, or education management organization accountable for complying with the final requirements; and
- (4) Report to the SEA the school-level data required under section III of the final requirements.

E. WAIVERS: If the SEA has requested any waivers of requirements applicable to the LEA's School Improvement Grant, an LEA must indicate which of those waivers it intends to implement.

The LEA must check each waiver that the LEA will implement. If the LEA does not intend to implement the waiver with respect to each applicable school, the LEA must indicate for which schools it will implement the waiver.

- ☐ Extending the period of availability of school improvement funds.

Note: If an SEA has requested and received a waiver of the period of availability of school improvement funds, that waiver automatically applies to all LEAs in the State.

- ☐ "Starting over" in the school improvement timeline for Tier I and Tier II Title I participating schools implementing a turnaround or restart model.

- ☐ Implementing a schoolwide program in a Tier I or Tier II Title I participating school that does not meet the 40 percent poverty eligibility threshold.

Note: If an SEA has not requested and received a waiver of any of these requirements, an LEA may submit a request to the Secretary.

ATTACHMENT A: Letter Regarding the Intent to Apply for 1003(g) School Improvement Grant

To: Select Supervisory Union/District Superintendents
Select Supervisory Union/District Curriculum Coordinators

From: Rae Ann Knopf, Deputy Commissioner

Date: insert date

Re: Title I, Part A 1003(g) School Improvement Grants

The School Improvement Grants (SIG) program is authorized by section 1003(g) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). Under section 1003(g)(1) of the ESEA, the Secretary must “award grants to States to enable the States to provide subgrants to local educational agencies for the purpose of providing assistance for school improvement consistent with section 1116.”

From a grant received pursuant to that provision, a State educational agency (SEA) must subgrant at least 95 percent of the funds it receives to its local educational agencies (Supervisory Union/Districts) for school improvement activities. In awarding such subgrants, an SEA must “give priority to the local educational agencies with the lowest-achieving schools that demonstrate (A) the greatest need for such funds; and (B) the strongest commitment to ensuring that such funds are used to provide adequate resources to enable the lowest-achieving schools to meet the goals under school and local educational improvement, corrective action and restructuring plans under Section 1116.”

The regulatory requirements expand upon these provisions, further defining Supervisory Union/Districts with the “greatest need” for SIG funds and the “strongest commitment” to ensuring that such funds are used to raise substantially student achievement in the persistently lowest-achieving schools in Vermont. “Persistently lowest-achieving schools” as determined by Vermont, means:

- (a) Any Title I school in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring that
 - (i) Is one of the lowest-achieving five Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring in the State and
- (b) Any secondary school that is eligible for Title I funds that
 - (i) Is among the lowest-achieving ten percent of secondary schools that did not make adequately yearly progress for the last two consecutive years or
 - (ii) Is a high school that has had a graduation rate as defined in 34 C.F.R. § 200.19(b) that is less than 60 percent over a number of years.

A school that falls within the definition of (a) above is a Tier I school and a school that falls within the definition of (b) above is a Tier II school for purposes of using SIG funds under section 1003(g) of the ESEA. All other Title I schools identified for improvement, corrective action and restructuring compose the group of Tier III schools.

The Vermont Department of Education records indicate your Supervisory Union/District has a school or schools which meet the criteria for Tier I, Tier II and/or Tier III schools. Refer to the chart below:

SUPERVISORY UNION/DISTRICT Name NCES ID#	School Name	NCES ID #	Tier I	Tier II	Tier III

Each Supervisory Union/District may apply for a 1003(g) school improvement grant if it has one or more schools that qualify under Vermont's definition of a Tier I, Tier II or Tier III school. **Supervisory Union/Districts electing to apply for the school improvement 1003(g) grants, must complete each of the following prior to submitting an application.**

Each Supervisory Union/District must:

- A. Identify the Tier I, Tier II and Tier III schools the Supervisory Union/District commits to serve based on the eligible list provided above
- B. Identify the school intervention model (turnaround, restart, closure, or transformation) you will implement in each Tier I and Tier II school the district commits to serve (see Attachments D1 & D2 for determining intervention models)
- C. For each Tier I, Tier II and Tier III school you commit to serve, demonstrate that the Supervisory Union/District has met the following three requirements:
 1. Has analyzed the needs of each school and provided a narrative of the needs assessment according to the information in the application.
 2. Has selected an intervention model (Tier I and Tier II) or activities (Tier III) for each school based on the individual school's needs assessment and identified root causes
 3. Has the capacity to enable each school to implement, fully and effectively, the required activities of the school intervention model it has selected as evaluated by the information in Attachment 3
- D. If the Supervisory Union/District is not applying to serve each Tier I school, explain why the district lacks capacity to serve each Tier I school.
- E. Determine a preliminary budget (see Attachment H) indicating the amount of 1003(g) school improvement grant funds the Supervisory Union/District will use to address the following items:
 1. Implement the selected school intervention model in each Tier I school and Tier II school(s) it commits to serve
 2. Implement research-based activities in Tier III schools
 3. Conduct Supervisory Union/District-level activities designed to support implementation of the selected school intervention models in the Supervisory Union/District's Tier I, Tier II and activities in Tier III schools

A Supervisory Union/District must establish annual goals for student achievement on the State's ESEA assessments in both reading/language arts and mathematics that will be used to monitor each school that receives SIG funds. Additionally, the United States Department of Education will hold each school receiving 1003(g) school improvement funds accountable for the following indicators:

- Number of instructional minutes within the school year
- Percentage of students at or above each proficiency level on State assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics, by grade level and student subgroup
- Student participation rate on state assessments in reading/language arts and in mathematics, by student subgroup
- Average scale scores on state assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics, by grade level, for the "all students" subgroup, for each achievement quartile and for each subgroup
- Percentage of limited English proficient students who attain English language proficiency
- Graduation rate (if applicable)
- Dropout rate (if applicable)
- Student attendance rate
- Number and percentage of students completing advanced coursework (e.g., AP/IB), early-college high schools or dual enrollment classes (if applicable)
- Discipline incidents
- Truants
- Distribution of teachers by performance level on a Supervisory Union/District's teacher evaluation system
- Teacher attendance rate

Supervisory Unions/Districts who intend to file an application for the SIG program must submit a letter of intent to apply for the 1003(g) school improvement funds and the required information electronically to Karin Edwards at karin.edwards@state.vt.us, or John Fischer at john.fischer@state.vt.us on or before May 15, 2010. Questions concerning this intent for application should be addressed to John or Karin at the email addresses above or through Jane Murtagh at 802-828-3103.

ATTACHMENT B
INITIAL SELF ASSESSMENT OF MAJOR FACTORS FOR RAPID CHANGE IN SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT
(As adapted from *A Theory of Change*, Richardson, 2009)

School Name: _____

Superintendent (name): _____

Superintendent (signature): _____ **Date:** _____

Major Factors Contributing to Rapid Change in School Improvement	Not Evident	Emerging	Strong
1. The Principal has communicated a sense of urgency with a prioritized plan for improvement and is present and recognized in the school as the instructional leader. The Principal can identify priorities for action and “quick wins.”			
2. All teachers and administrators know what a continuous improvement system is, how it works, and that the basis of that system is accountability through regular examination of student outcomes.			
3. The curriculum has been aligned to state standards and focused from K-12 and all teachers understand the main focal points that must be taught over the year. The curriculum is based on high expectations and rigorous requirements for all students.			
4. The schedule permits common planning time, grade level meetings, data team meetings, and after-school focus on curriculum and instruction. The schedule is focused on student academic and social success and does not get bogged down in several different and weakly defined initiatives.			
5. Each grade level has common formative assessments that are given on a regular basis, tracked for each student, and reviewed at data team meetings.			
6. A school data team reviews student progress on formative and other assessments and reports these results regularly to the faculty. There is a computerized school data system in place for tracking all student outcomes.			
7. Professional development is delivered in schools and classrooms by experts among the staff or outside consultants, and is focused on areas identified as needing improvement by the school accountability system. Teachers share what they have learned and visit each others classrooms.			
8. The teacher evaluation system is capable of identifying teachers who are not providing adequate instruction in the classroom, and remediation efforts are time limited.			
9. Paraprofessionals must have an Associates Degree, must have passed a mathematics or reading test, and must have taken a district training program.			
10. The special education and student support system emphasizes regular classroom instruction, a response to intervention system, and an accountability system that is aligned with the formative assessment system and curricular expectations of the regular classroom.			

11. Resources are equitably distributed across all classes and support systems.			
12. Social and emotional support systems reflect the needs of the students and their resources.			
13. Schools develop career and college readiness programs in middle school and continue those programs throughout high school with defined pathways to college, internships, and supports.			
14. There are preschool, after-school, and summer programs available for all students needing more support.			
15. There is evidence of community and business support or partnerships.			

Attachment C

A Theory of Action for Assessing School and District Improvement Systems in Vermont (Nancy Richardson)

Since 2004, through the auspices of the Champlain Valley Educator Development Center, I have studied school improvement efforts in 18 schools in Vermont. Initially, these studies focused on specific topics such as: needs based professional development, special education systems, the role of literacy coordinators, after-school programs, or needed improvements in mathematics and reading. In the past year the studies have been termed “audits” triggered by the Corrective Action phase of the No Child Left Behind Act. Although they began as studies of specific topics, all studies have resulted in descriptions of the complex systems that must be in place in a number of areas to improve student outcomes.

Vermont may now be entering into a process to evaluate schools and districts with more rigorous criteria than has been applied before. This reflects federal efforts to focus on turning around underperforming schools across America. This new evaluation process will focus on student outcomes and teacher performance. There will be a number of prescribed remedies for improvement.

How should Vermont proceed on this new road? There are a number of Vermont and national research studies that have supported many evaluation techniques and remedies. The issue for Vermont is not a lack of research on school improvement. The issue is how to translate school improvement information into a theory of action for assessing school performance in the areas that have been shown to affect performance and how to use that information to develop recommendations for action.

The following is a review of what I have found in the 18 CVEDC school studies in schools in the northwest section of Vermont. These findings are part of a body of knowledge that has been developed through action research, a series of policy papers for Massachusetts, and a review of the most important studies on school improvement and turnarounds. Among these studies is an 8 state review of how other states have moved swiftly to increase rigor and improve college and career readiness in Massachusetts.

Research on School Improvement

Many efforts to improve schools in the 1990s and early years of this decade were prompted by the U.S. student performance on international assessments in reading, mathematics, and science. In *A Nation at Risk*,¹ published in 1983 by a national commission spearheaded by the National Governors Association, the dismal performance of American students on these assessments was termed a threat to the nation’s future economic viability. Although prompted by student outcome data, the efforts to improve schools generally stayed away from student outcome data and focused on teacher education, school organization, and major factors in improving curricula. Among these studies are many landmark studies that have influenced professional development, governance, and improvement efforts across the country.²

¹ National Commission on Excellence in Education. (1983). *A nation at risk*. www.ed.gov/pub/NATATRisk/index.org

² Boyer, E. 1983. *High school: A report on secondary education in America*. New York: Carengie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and Harper and Row. Edmonds, R. 1979. *Effective schools for the urban poor*. **Educational Leadership**

As the years advanced and the U.S. student rankings among their international counterparts remained low, new concerns surfaced about the achievement gaps between students from high resource homes and those from low resource homes or students with disabilities. Researchers began to go beyond the studies of process and organizational factors and into more research on specific factors that affect student learning. These studies examined standards, curricular coherence, student outcomes and how schools use data, and teacher quality.³

These studies have documented what many observers had noted over a period of two decades- that many U.S. schools present:

- A lack of coherence in the curriculum
- A lack of rigor in academic content
- Poor leadership.
- Poor patterns of communication among teachers and administrative staff in schools.
- A lack of understanding of how continuous improvement systems should work to improve student learning.
- Abbreviated school schedules.
- Poor teacher preparation.
- A lack of focus on student outcome data.
- Poorly organized student support systems.
- Poor alignment of the curricula from K-16.

Beginning in the latter half of this decade, a number of states have been working with the National Governors Association and Achieve, Inc. to develop state policies that will result in reform at the local level. A recent review of 8 states efforts to improve education are included in my study, *Recent Initiatives to Improve Alignment and Instructional Quality in Science Education in the States: Implications for Massachusetts*.⁴ States are engaged in a remarkably similar approach to programs and policies that would improve instruction at the local level, including: 1) improvements in teacher education programs and incentives for teaching in sciences, mathematics, and in hard to staff schools; 2) rigorous school standards and courses in science, mathematics, and language arts; 3) enhanced graduation

37 (2).pp. 15-18. Elmore, R. (2004). *School improvement from the inside out: Policy, practice, and performance*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Educational Press; Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading in a culture of change*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, Inc; *Turning Points: Preparing American youth for the 21st century*. Washington D.C: Carnegie Council on Economic Development.

³ Achieve, Inc. 2008. *The American Diploma project: Closing the expectations gap*. Washington D.C: Achieve, Inc; Ainsworth, L. 2004. *Power standards: Identifying standards that matter*. Englewood Cliffs: Advanced Learning Press; Institute for Education Sciences. 2009. *Assisting students struggling with mathematics: Response to intervention (RTI) for elementary and middle schools*. Washington D.C: Author; National Center for Education and the Economy. 2007. *Tough choices or tough times*. Washington D.C: Author; National Education Summit on High Schools. 2005. *An action agenda for improving America's high schools*. Washington D.C: National Governors Association and Achieve, Inc; National Science Board. (2007). *National action plan for addressing critical needs of the U.S science, mathematics, engineering and technology education system*. Washington D.C: National Science Board; National Academy of Science. (2007) *Rising above the gathering storm: Energizing and employing America for a brighter economic future*. Washington D.C: National Academies Press 112-128; Reeves, D. 2002. *The daily disciplines of leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

⁴ Richardson, N., Berns, B., Sandler, J. & Marco, L. 2008. *Recent initiatives to improve alignment and instructional quality in science education in the states: Implications for Massachusetts*. Newton, MA: Education Development Center.

requirements with assessments to ensure mastery; 4) an alignment of the K-16 curricula with state standards and enhanced rigor and the introduction of college and career readiness standards and programs; 5) the development of many dual enrollment or early college programs; 6) early middle school career planning and support; 7) the development of P-20 student data tracking systems.

Recent studies are focusing on important factors that are in place in successful schools and the elements that must be in place to turn failing schools around.⁵ In *The Turnaround Challenge*, Mass Insight differentiates school turnaround processes from school improvement and focuses on major factors that must be on place for this difficult transition to take place: 1) dramatic change in all systems; 2) a sense of urgency; 3) leaders empowered to make dramatic changes; 3) high capacity partners, innovative policies and support from the state level.

In a review of the characteristics of schools in Vermont that have improved student outcomes, the *Roots of Success* identifies several critical features of successful schools: 1) high student expectations; 2) an understanding of continuous improvement processes; 3) leadership; 4) a focus and use of student data; 5) a teaching culture that expects high quality instruction; 6) an effective student support system; 7) a supportive school climate, 8) family engagement.

The Institute for Education Sciences of the U.S. Department of Education has reviewed the research and identified the following actions that must be taken to turn schools around: 1) leadership signals the need for dramatic change; 2) leadership must be changed either by removal of the Principal or a change in leadership strategies; 4) the school leader must be the instructional leader; 5) all changes must be publicly announced; 6) an emphasis is placed on the examination of student data and progress on formative assessments; 7) priorities for changes are developed; 8) targeted professional development is directed to areas of weakness; 9) staff aligns the curriculum to meet state standards; 10) a continuous improvement monitoring system is put in place; 11) leadership identifies quick wins- one or more goals that can be accomplished immediately; 12) leadership identifies weak staff members and redeploys or removes them; 13) leadership recruits new highly qualified staff.⁶ These guidelines can be employed by rural schools, but more often than not, an emphasis must be placed on retraining staff, since other candidates are not apt to be available.

The Center for Education Policy has reported on five years of studies that followed schools that restructured under the No Child Left Behind Act. The study is entitled, *Improving Low Performing Schools: Lessons from Five Years of Studying School Restructuring Under the No Child Left Behind Act*.⁷ In this report, schools that were successful in improving student achievement used multiple strategies,

⁵ Institute of Education Sciences. 2008. *Turning around chronically low performing schools*. Washington DC: Institute for Education Sciences. U.S. Department of Education; Vermont Department of Education. 2009. *Root of Success: Effective practices in Vermont schools*; Mass Insight. 2009. *The turnaround challenge*. Boston, MA: Mass Insight. New England Secondary School Consortium. *Global best practices in context*. Author: 2009.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Center on Education Policy. 2009. *Improving low performing schools: Lessons from five years of studying school restructuring under the No Child Left Behind Act*. Washington DC: author.

focused and used student data frequently, and replaced some staff, but not all. These schools avoided draconian measures, such as closing down or replacing all staff.

New federal guidelines for both discretionary and formula funding contain many of these elements in their funding guidelines, including a focus on turning around low performing schools and focusing on student data, formative assessments and teacher performance.⁸

Vermont School Efforts to Improve

Vermont schools are unique in their leadership, staffing, and in the ways in which they organize their systems. In the studies of 18 schools, I have been in several outstanding schools where leadership has immediately begun the business of aligning and focusing the curricula, using student data, and developing a climate of open communication. I have observed others that seem stuck in previous decades where the Principal was responsible for general operations, and instructional leadership was either left up to a few teachers or completely absent.

In general, Vermont schools are welcoming places with a large number of talented teachers and staff. Vermont students score well on a number of national statistics, including scores on national assessments and the percentage of students who attend college. Like other states, Vermont is having difficulty closing the low achievement gap among cohorts of students from low resources homes or students with disabilities.

Although many schools have taken leadership in improvement, some schools continue to lag behind, especially in having students master the curricula based on state standards. A summary of the factors that are impeding improvement in Vermont schools follows:

1. Poor leadership by a Principal who may not understand how systems must be organized to foster improvement, and who does not communicate a vision or plan to staff.
2. Lack of communication time for teachers and administrators to focus on the actions that must be taken and no common planning time.
3. Lack of coherence and alignment in the curriculum across grades and within grade levels.
4. Lack of alignment of the curriculum to the state standards.
5. No formative assessments, no data committee, or a committee that does not understand how to interpret standardized assessments.

⁸ U.S. Department of Education. 2009. *Race to the Top Program Executive Summary*. Washington DC: Author.

6. Low student expectations and lack of rigor in the curriculum.
7. Weak student improvement systems or special education systems that have no accountability measures attached to them.
8. Inequitable resources or failure to provide instruction in the least restrictive environment.
9. No sense of urgency or the implications of faulty practices.
10. In a small percentage of schools, poor instruction that is so deficient the teacher evaluation process may not be working.
11. Scheduling problems that do not provide enough time or that time that is used for series of initiatives that should be dropped altogether.
12. Poor instruction by teachers who have not been trained in specific content areas or pedagogical techniques that foster inquiry. And paraprofessionals who do not have an Associate's Degree or who have not passed any reading and mathematics tests demonstrating their proficiency.

A Theory of Action

Given these findings, how does one go about the business of integrating research on school improvement with the need to assess schools for immediate action on improvement? The experience of working in several schools has resulted in a template for this process that includes: 1) conversations with administrators and a review of assessment and other information; 2) interviews with key staff across all grades, including specialists; 3) observations of classroom instruction; 4) a survey of all teachers. We have developed forms for the observations, interviews, and the survey, but the questions may vary, depending upon the school.

In general, multiple measures are better than one single measure, and multiple assessors are better than a single assessor. All questions are based on the research cited and in our own experiences as school managers and improvement specialists. In this process I have had the support of Darlene Worth and Paula Bowen to review documents and assist in observations. The studies we have completed began as general school improvement studies, but have morphed into beginning school turnaround studies based on the need to make rapid changes in the Corrective Action phase.

A list of the major factors that we examine in our studies follows:

- The Principal has communicated a sense of urgency with a prioritized plan for improvement and is present and recognized in the school as the instructional leader. The Principal can identify priorities for action and "quick wins."
- All teachers and administrators know what a continuous improvement system is, how it works, and that the basis of that system is accountability through regular examination of student outcomes.

- The curriculum has been aligned to state standards and focused from K-12 and all teachers understand the main focal points that must be taught over the year. The curriculum is based on high expectations and rigorous requirements for all students.
- The schedule permits common planning time, grade level meetings, data team meetings, and after-school focus on curriculum and instruction. The schedule is focused on student academic and social success and does not get bogged down in several different and weakly defined initiatives.
- Each grade level has common formative assessments that are given on a regular basis, tracked for each student, and reviewed at data team meetings.
- A school data team reviews student progress on formative and other assessments and reports these results regularly to the faculty. There is a computerized school data system in place for tracking all student outcomes.
- Professional development is delivered in schools and classrooms by experts among the staff or outside consultants, and is focused on areas identified as needing improvement by the school accountability system. Teachers share what they have learned and visit each others classrooms.
- The teacher evaluation system is capable of identifying teachers who are not providing adequate instruction in the classroom, and remediation efforts are time limited.
- Paraprofessionals must have an Associates Degree, must have passed a mathematics or reading test, and must have taken a district training program.
- The special education and student support system emphasizes regular classroom instruction, a response to intervention system, and an accountability system that is aligned with the formative assessment system and curricular expectations of the regular classroom.
- Resources are equitably distributed across all classes and support systems.
- Social and emotional support systems reflect the needs of the students and their resources.
- Schools develop career and college readiness programs in middle school and continue those programs throughout high school with defined pathways to college, internships, and supports.
- There are preschool, after-school, and summer programs available for all students needing more support.
- There is evidence of community and business support or partnerships.

Factors for Assessing School Capacity to Improve/Actions to Take
The Principal has communicated urgency, vision, and a plan
The Principal is recognized as the instructional leader.
All staff know how a continuous improvement system works.
The curriculum is aligned and focused across and within grades.
The curriculum is aligned with state standards.
The curriculum reflects rigor.

All students are expected to master the curriculum.
The school has a data team that meets to review student outcomes and a computerized student data tracking system.
All teachers review their student data regularly.
Common formative assessments have been developed for each grade across all grades in the school and are tracked by the student data system.
The schedule permits common planning time and is focused on academic improvement and social support.
There is a warm and welcoming climate with firm expectations for acceptable behavior.
Paraprofessionals have passed proficiency requirements.
Professional development is provided in classrooms and is focused on school areas of need identified by the accountability system.
The Principal is frequently in classrooms and the teacher evaluation system is effective in improving teaching and learning.
Teachers reflect the climate of open communication by visiting one another's classes and sharing lessons and other materials.
The special education and support systems are provided in regular classrooms, are based on the response to intervention system, and connected to the formative assessment system.
Resources are equitably distributed across classes and support systems
Social and emotional support systems are adequate for the student needs.
There are preschool, after school, and summer programs for all students.
There is evidence of business and community support.
Career and college readiness programs begin in middle school and offer pathways to college, internships, and supports in high school.

These factors are identified through the interview and observation process, and by reviewing important documents. Individual factors may vary in their importance and priority for action. For high schools the area of career and college readiness looms large; for elementary schools, supportive instruction may be a focus. A large part of the job of the assessor is to convey a sense of urgency to teachers and

administrators and to assist in the prioritization of efforts that may take several years. In one school that we studied, the teachers were unaware that their actions might have ramifications down the road for many students who were not being offered a rigorous curriculum. Many in Vermont seem unaware of the federal actions being taken, or of the efforts by several states to upgrade content to reflect the real challenges that will await students seeking jobs in the 21st century. A major purpose of these audits should be setting the stage of urgent and dramatic action to improve schools.

ⁱ National Commission on Excellence in Education. (1983). *A nation at risk*. www.ed.gov/pub/NATATRisk/inde.org

ⁱ Boyer, E. 1983. *High school: A report on secondary education in America*. New York: Carengie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and Harper and Row. Edmonds, R. 1979. *Effective schools for the urban poor*. **Educational Leadership** **37 (2)**, pp. 15-18. Elmore, R. (2004). *School improvement from the inside out: Policy, practice, and performance*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Educational Press; Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading in a culture of change*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, Inc; *Turning Points: Preparing American youth for the 21st century*. Washington D.C: Carnegie Council on Economic Development.

ⁱⁱ Achieve, Inc. 2008. *The American Diploma project: Closing the expectations gap*. Washington D.C: Achieve, Inc; Ainsworth, L. 2004. *Power standards: Identifying standards that matter*. Englewood Cliffs: Advanced Learning Press; Institute for Education Sciences. 2009. *Assisting students struggling with mathematics: Response to intervention (RTI) for elementary and middle schools*. Washington D.C: Author; National Center for Education and the Economy. 2007. *Tough choices or tough times*. Washington D.C: Author; National Education Summit on High Schools. 2005. *An action agenda for improving America's high schools*. Washington D.C: National Governors Association and Achieve, Inc; National Science Board. (2007). *National action plan for addressing critical needs of the U.S science, mathematics, engineering and technology education system*. Washington D.C: National Science Board; National Academy of Science. (2007) *Rising above the gathering storm: Energizing and employing America for a brighter economic future*. Washington D.C: National Academies Press 112-128; Reeves, D. 2002. *The daily disciplines of leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

^{iv} Richardson, N., Berns, B., Sandler, J. & Marco, L. 2008. *Recent initiatives to improve alignment and instructional quality in science education in the states: Implications for Massachusetts*. Newton, MA: Education Development Center.

^v Institute of Education Sciences. 2008. *Turning around chronically low performing schools*. Washington DC: Institute for Education Sciences. U.S. Department of Education; Vermont Department of Education. 2009. *Roots of Success: Effective practices in Vermont schools*; Mass Insight. 2009. *The turnaround challenge*. Boston, MA: Mass Insight. New England Secondary School Consortium. *Global best practices in context*. Author: 2009.

^{vi} Ibid.

^{vii} Center on Education Policy. 2009. *Improving low performing schools: Lessons from five years of studying school restructuring under the No Child Left Behind Act*. Washington DC: author.

^{viii} U.S. Department of Education. 2009. *Race to the Top Program Executive Summary*. Washington DC: Author.

Attachment D1: Description of the Intervention Models

School Closure:

- School closure occurs when an LEA closes a school and enrolls the students who attended that school in other schools in the LEA that are higher achieving.
- These other schools should be within reasonable proximity to the closed school and may include, but are not limited to, charter schools or new schools for which achievement data are not yet available.

Vermont Applicability

Under Vermont Statutes Title 16 V.S.A. § 165 the State Board of Education by recommendation of the Commissioner, has the power to under repeat conditions of non-improvement as defined in statute, close a school and require that the district pay tuition to another public school or an approved independent school pursuant to chapter 21 of this title.

Turnaround Model:

- Replace the principal and grant the newly assigned principal sufficient operational flexibility (including in staffing, calendars/time, and budgeting) to implement fully a comprehensive approach in order to substantially improve student achievement outcomes and increase high school graduation rates.
- Use locally adopted competencies to measure the effectiveness of staff who can work within the turnaround environment to meet the needs of students by:
 - Screening all existing staff and rehiring no more than 50 percent, and
 - Selecting new staff.
- Implement such strategies as financial incentives, increased opportunities for promotion and career growth, and more flexible work conditions that are designed to recruit, place, and retain staff with the skills necessary to meet the needs of the students in the turnaround school.
- Provide staff ongoing, high-quality, job-embedded professional development that is aligned with the school's comprehensive instructional program and designed with school staff to ensure that they are equipped to facilitate effective teaching and learning and have the capacity to successfully implement school reform strategies.
- Adopt a new governance structure, which may include, but is not limited to, requiring the school to report to a new "turnaround office" in the LEA or SEA, hire a "turnaround leader" who reports directly to the Superintendent or Chief Academic Officer, or enter into a multi-year contract with the LEA or SEA to obtain added flexibility in exchange for greater accountability.
- Use data to identify and implement an instructional program that is research-based and vertically aligned from one grade to the next as well as aligned with State academic standards.
- Promote the continuous use of student data (such as from formative, interim, and summative assessments) to inform and differentiate instruction in order to meet the academic needs of individual students.
- Establish schedules and implement strategies that provide increased learning time (as defined in the final regulations-see definition below).
- Provide appropriate social-emotional and community-oriented services and supports for students.

A turnaround model may also implement other strategies:

- Any of the required and permissible activities under the transformation model.
- A new school model (e.g., themed, dual language academy).

Vermont Applicability

It is important to note that both the school closure and the turnaround intervention options are complicated by the rural nature of the state. Vermont schools are 71.3% rural with 79.25% of schools in small school districts. This is more than three times of 19.4 percent (Johnson & Strange, 2009, p. 77). Vermont's smaller school districts are organized into 63 supervisory unions/districts. Of those 63 Supervisory Union/Districts in Vermont, 62 support only one high school and in many cases this may be a K-12 school. In rural counties with small numbers of schools, school closure may not be a viable option, because students will not have another school to attend, if, for example, the one high school in their district is closed. The challenge posed by these small districts is also problematic for implementing the turnaround model because it will be difficult to replace the principal and more than fifty percent of the staff in districts that are currently struggling to fill all of their teaching positions with highly qualified teachers.

Restart Model:

- A restart model is one in which an LEA converts a school or closes and reopens a school under a charter school operator, a charter management organization (CMO), or an education management organization (EMO) that has been selected through a rigorous review process. (A CMO is a non-profit organization that operates or manages charter schools by centralizing or sharing certain functions and resources among schools. An EMO is a for-profit or non-profit organization that provides "whole-school operation" services to an LEA.)
- A restart model must enroll, within the grades it serves, any former student who wishes to attend the school.

Vermont Applicability

In the restart model, an LEA would close a school and reopen it under a charter school operator, a CMO, or an EMO. This option is not currently available in Vermont because no charter entities are available to work to provide these services. The low population, small schools, 94% white demographic and relatively high educational outcomes overall makes Vermont a poor location for supporting charter and/or education management organizational services.

Transformation Model - the LEA must implement each of the required activities:**1. Developing and increasing teacher and school leader effectiveness**

Required activities - The LEA must complete the following actions:

- Replace the principal who led the school prior to commencement of the transformation model.
- Use rigorous, transparent, and equitable evaluation systems for teachers and principals that:

- Take into account data on student growth (as defined in the final regulations-see definition below) as a significant factor as well as other factors such as multiple observation-based assessments of performance and ongoing collections of professional practice reflective of student achievement and increased high school graduations rates, and
- Are designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement.
- Identify and reward school leaders, teachers, and other staff who, in implementing this model, have increased student achievement and high school graduation rates and identify and remove those who, after ample opportunities have been provided for them to improve their professional practice, have not done so.
- Provide staff ongoing, high-quality, job-embedded professional development (e.g., regarding subject-specific pedagogy, instruction that reflects a deeper understanding of the community served by the school, or differentiated instruction) that is aligned with the school's comprehensive instructional program and designed with school staff to ensure they are equipped to facilitate effective teaching and learning and have the capacity to successfully implement school reform strategies.
- Implement such strategies as financial incentives, increased opportunities for promotion and career growth, and more flexible work conditions that are designed to recruit, place, and retain staff with the skills necessary to meet the needs of the students in a transformation school.

Permissible activities - An LEA may also implement other strategies to develop teachers' and school leaders' effectiveness:

- Provide additional compensation to attract and retain staff with the skills necessary to meet the needs of the students in a transformation school.
- Institute a system for measuring changes in instructional practices resulting from professional development.
- Ensure that the school is not required to accept a teacher without the mutual consent of the teacher and principal, regardless of the teacher's seniority.

2. Comprehensive instructional reform strategies

Required activities - The LEA must complete the following actions:

- Use data to identify and implement an instructional program that is research-based and vertically aligned from one grade to the next as well as aligned with State academic standards.
- Promote the continuous use of student data (such as from formative, interim, and summative assessments) to inform and differentiate instruction in order to meet the academic needs of individual students.

Permissible activities - An LEA may also implement comprehensive instructional reform strategies:

- Conduct periodic reviews to ensure that the curriculum is being implemented with fidelity, is having the intended impact on student achievement, and is modified if ineffective.
- Implement a school-wide "response-to-intervention" model.

- Provide additional supports and professional development to teachers and principals in order to implement effective strategies to support students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment and to ensure that limited English proficient students acquire language skills to master academic content.
- Use and integrate technology-based supports and interventions as part of the instructional program.
- In secondary schools (schools in Vermont with a 9-12 gradespan)
 - Increase rigor by offering opportunities for students to enroll in advanced coursework (such as Advanced Placement; International Baccalaureate; or science, technology, engineering, and mathematics courses, especially those that incorporate rigorous and relevant project, inquiry or design-based contextual learning opportunities), early-college high schools, dual enrollment programs or thematic learning academies that prepare students for college and careers, including by providing appropriate supports designed to ensure that low-achieving students may take advantage of these programs and coursework.
 - Improve student transition from middle to high school through summer transition programs or freshman academies.
 - Increase graduation rates through research based initiatives (e.g., credit-recovery programs, re-engagement strategies, smaller learning communities, competency-based instruction and performance-based assessments, and acceleration of basic reading and mathematics skills).
 - Establish early-warning systems to identify students who may be at risk of failing to achieve to high standards or graduate.

3. Increasing learning time and creating community-oriented schools

Required activities - The LEA must complete the following actions:

- Establish schedules and strategies that provide increased learning time (as defined below).
- Provide ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement.

Permissible activities - An LEA may also implement other strategies that extend learning time and create community-oriented schools:

- Partner with parents and parent organizations, faith- and community-based organizations, health clinics, other State or local agencies, and others to create safe school environments that meet students' social, emotional, and health needs.
- Extend or restructure the school day so as to add time for such strategies as advisory periods that build relationships between students, faculty, and other school staff.
- Implement approaches to improve school climate and discipline, such as implementing a system of positive behavioral supports or taking steps to eliminate bullying and student harassment.
- Expand the school program to offer full-day kindergarten or pre-kindergarten.

4. Providing operational flexibility and sustained support

Required activities - The LEA must complete the following actions:

- Give the school sufficient operational flexibility (such as staffing, calendars/time, and budgeting) to implement fully a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student achievement outcomes and increase high school graduation rates.
- Ensure that the school receives ongoing, intensive technical assistance and related support from the LEA, the SEA, or a designated external lead partner organization (such as a school turnaround organization or an EMO).

Permissible activities - The LEA may also implement other strategies for providing operational flexibility and intensive support:

- Allow the school to be run under a new governance arrangement, such as a turnaround division within the LEA or SEA.
- Implement a per-pupil school-based budget formula that is weighted based on student needs.

Attachment D2 – Model Selection Guide for Tier I and Tier II Schools

LEA Tier I and Tier II School Model Selection Assessment Tool

A. Turnaround Model – Replace the Principal and at least 50% of the staff.
After reviewing the questions on the following two pages, is this the model your school chooses to implement?
If yes, include in your plan all required and permissible activities you plan to implement with funds from the School Improvement grant.
If no, in the space below, describe the reasons why this model was not a good fit for your school.
B. Restart Model – Close the school and reopen it under Charter Management Authority
After reviewing the questions on the following two pages, is this the model your school chooses to implement?
If yes, include in your application all required and permissible activities (as defined in Appendix A of USED SEA Application) you will be implementing as part of your school improvement plan.
If no, in the space below, describe the reasons why this model was not a good fit for your school.
C. School Closure Model
After reviewing the questions on the following two pages, is this the model your school chooses to implement?
If yes, include in your application all required and permissible activities (as defined in Appendix A of USED SEA Application) you will be implementing as part of your school improvement plan.
If no, in the space below, describe the reasons why this model was not a good fit for your school.
D. Transformation Model
After reviewing the questions on the following two pages, is this the model your school chooses to implement?
If yes, include in your application all required and permissible activities (as defined in Appendix A of USED SEA Application) you will be implementing as part of your school improvement plan.
If no, in the space below, describe the reasons why this model was not a good fit for your school.

Models

A. Turnaround Model – Replace the Principal and at least 50% of the staff.

1. How will the LEA select a new leader for the school, and what experience, training, and skills will the new leader be expected to possess?
2. How will the LEA assign effective teachers and leaders to the lowest achieving schools?
3. How will the LEA begin to develop a pipeline of effective teachers and leaders to work in turnaround schools?
4. How will staff replacement be executed—what is the process for determining which staff remains in the school and the process for selecting replacements?
5. How will the language in collective bargaining agreements be negotiated to ensure the most talented teachers and leaders remain in the school?
6. What supports will be provided to staff being assigned to other schools?
7. What are the budgetary implications of retaining surplus staff within the LEA if that is necessary?
8. What is the LEA's own capacity to execute and support a turnaround? What organizations are available to assist with the implementation of the turnaround model?
9. What changes in decision-making policies and mechanisms (including greater school-level flexibility in budgeting, staffing, and scheduling) must accompany the infusion of human capital?
10. What changes in operational practice must accompany the infusion of human capital, and how will these changes be brought about and sustained?

B. Restart Model – Close the school and reopen it under Charter Management Authority

1. Are there qualified charter management organizations (CMOs) or education management organizations (EMOs) willing to partner with the LEA to start a new school (or convert an existing school) in this location?
2. Does your local statute allow for school charters?
3. Will your school board petition the legislature for waivers to current statute regarding collective bargaining, school quality standards, and funding?
4. Do you have an alternative for students who may not be served by the Charter?
5. How can statutory, policy, and collective bargaining language relevant to the school be negotiated to allow for closure and restart of the school?
6. Do you have the ability to reassign staff not selected by the Charter entity to run the new school?
7. What are the budgetary implications of retaining surplus staff within the LEA if that is necessary?
8. What is the LEA's own capacity to support the charter school with access to contractually specified district services and access to available funding?
9. What performance expectations will be contractually specified for the charter school, CMO, or EMO?
10. Is the LEA (or other authorizer) prepared to terminate the contract if performance expectations are not met?

School Closure Model

1. What are the metrics to identify schools to be closed?
2. What steps are in place to make certain closure decisions are based on tangible data and readily transparent to the local community?
3. How will the students and their families be supported by the LEA through the re-enrollment process?
4. Which higher-achieving schools have the capacity to receive students from the schools being considered for closure?
5. How will the receiving schools be staffed with quality staff to accommodate the increase in students?
6. How will current staff be reassigned—what is the process for determining which staff members are dismissed and which staff members are reassigned?
7. Does the statutory, policy, and collective bargaining context relevant to the school allow for removal of current staff?
8. What supports will be provided to recipient schools if current staff members are reassigned?
9. What safety and security considerations might be anticipated for students of the school to be closed and the receiving school(s)?
10. What are the budgetary implications of retaining surplus staff within the LEA if that is necessary?
11. How will the LEA track student progress in the recipient schools?
12. What is the impact of school closure to the school's neighborhood, enrollment area, or community?
13. How does school closure fit within the LEA's overall reform efforts?

Transformation Model

1. How will the LEA select a new leader for the school, and what experience, training, and skills will the new leader be expected to possess?
2. How will the LEA enable the new leader to make strategic staff replacements when indicated?
3. What is the LEA's own capacity to support the transformation, including the implementation of required, recommended, and diagnostically determined strategies?
4. What changes in decision making policies and mechanisms (including greater school-level flexibility in budgeting, staffing, and scheduling) must accompany the transformation?
5. What changes in operational practice must accompany the transformation, and how will these changes be brought about and sustained?

ATTACHMENT E – Initial School Capacity Self Assessment

As adapted from A Theory of Action (Richardson, 2009)

School Name: _____

Superintendent (name): _____

Superintendent (signature): _____ **Date:** _____

Factors for Assessing School Capacity to Improve/Actions to Take	Not Evident	Emerging	Strong
The Principal has communicated urgency, vision, and a plan			
The Principal is recognized as the instructional leader.			
All staff know how a continuous improvement system works.			
The curriculum is aligned and focused across and within grades.			
The curriculum is aligned with state standards.			
The curriculum reflects rigor.			
All students are expected to master the curriculum.			
The school has a data team that meets to review student outcomes and a computerized student data tracking system.			
All teachers review their student data regularly.			
Common formative assessments have been developed for each grade across all grades in the school and are tracked by the student data system.			
The schedule permits common planning time and is focused on academic improvement and social support.			
There is a warm and welcoming climate with firm expectations for acceptable behavior.			
Paraprofessionals have passed proficiency requirements.			
Professional development is provided in classrooms and is focused on school areas of need identified by the accountability system.			
The Principal is frequently in classrooms and the teacher evaluation system is effective in improving teaching and learning.			
Teachers reflect the climate of open communication by visiting one another's classes and sharing lessons and other materials.			
The special education and support systems are provided in regular classrooms, are based on the response to intervention system, and connected to the formative assessment system.			
Resources are equitably distributed across classes and support systems			
Social and emotional support systems are adequate for the student needs.			

There are preschool, after school, and summer programs for all students.			
There is evidence of business and community support.			
Career and college readiness programs begin in middle school and offer pathways to college, internships, and supports in high school.			

ATTACHMENT F – Transformation Model Outline from 1003(g) of Title I Guidance

Transformation Model
<p>(d) <u>Transformation model.</u> A transformation model is one in which an LEA implements each of the following strategies:</p>
<p>(1) <u>Developing and increasing teacher and school leader effectiveness.</u></p>
<p>(i) <u>Required activities.</u> The LEA must--</p>
<p>(A) Replace the principal who led the school prior to commencement of the transformation model;</p>
<p>(B) Use rigorous, transparent, and equitable evaluation systems for teachers and principals that--</p>
<p>(1) Take into account data on student growth (as defined in this notice) as a significant factor as well as other factors such as multiple observation-based assessments of performance and ongoing collections of professional practice reflective of student achievement and increased high-school graduations rates; and</p>
<p>(2) Are designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement;</p>
<p>(C) Identify and reward school leaders, teachers, and other staff who, in implementing this model, have increased student achievement and high-school graduation rates and identify and remove those who, after ample opportunities have been provided for them to improve their professional practice, have not done so;</p>
<p>(D) Provide staff with ongoing, high-quality, job-embedded professional development (<i>e.g.</i>, regarding subject-specific pedagogy, instruction that reflects a deeper understanding of the community served by the school, or differentiated instruction) that is aligned with the school’s comprehensive instructional program and designed with school staff to ensure they are equipped to facilitate effective teaching and learning and have the capacity to successfully implement school reform strategies; and</p>
<p>(E) Implement such strategies as financial incentives, increased opportunities for promotion and career growth, and more flexible work conditions that are designed to recruit, place, and retain staff with the skills necessary to meet the needs of the students in a transformation school.</p>
<p>Permissible Activities--</p>
<p>An LEA may also implement other strategies to develop teachers’ and leaders’ effectiveness, such as</p>
<p>(A) Providing additional compensation to attract and retain staff with the skills necessary to meet the needs of the students in a transformation school</p>
<p>(B) Instituting a system for measuring changes in instructional practices resulting from professional development</p>
<p>(C) Ensuring the school is not required to accept a teacher without the mutual consent of the teacher and principal regardless of the teacher’s seniority</p>
<p>(2)<u>Comprehensive instructional reform strategies</u></p>
<p>Required activities – The LEA must -</p>
<p>(A) Use data to identify and implement an instructional program that is research-based and “vertically aligned” from one grade to the next as well as aligned with the State academic standards</p>
<p>(B) Promote the continuous use of student data (such as formative, interim, and summative assessments) to inform and differentiate instruction in order to meet the academic needs of individual students.</p>
<p>Permissible Activities - An LEA may also implement comprehensive instructional reform strategies, such as -</p>
<p>(A) Conducting periodic reviews to ensure that the curriculum is being implemented with fidelity, is having the intended impact on student achievement, and is modified if ineffective</p>
<p>(B) Implementing a schoolwide “response to intervention” model;</p>
<p>(C) Providing additional supports and professional development to teachers and principals in order to implement effective strategies to support students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment and to ensure that limited English proficient students acquire language skills to master academic content;</p>
<p>(D) Using and integrating technology-based supports and interventions as part of the instructional</p>

program and
<p>(E) In secondary schools –</p> <p>(1) Increasing rigor by offering opportunities for students to enroll in advanced coursework (such as Advanced Placement; International Baccalaureate: or science, technology, engineering, and mathematics courses, especially those that incorporate rigorous and relevant project-, inquiry-, or design-based contextual learning opportunities). Early college high schools, dual enrollment programs, or thematic learning academies that prepare students for college and careers, including by providing appropriate supports designed to ensure that low-achieving students can take advantage of these programs and coursework;</p> <p>(2) Improving student transition from middle to high school through summer transition programs or freshman academies</p> <p>(3) Increasing graduation rates through, for example, credit-recovery programs, re-engagement strategies, smaller learning communities, competency-based instruction and performance-based assessment, and acceleration of basic reading and mathematics skills; or</p> <p>(4) Establishing early-warning systems to identify students who may be at risk of failing to achieve to high standards or graduate</p>
<p><u>(3) Increasing learning time and creating community-oriented schools.</u></p> <p>Required Activities. The LEA must –</p> <p>(A) Establish schedules and strategies that provide increased learning time (as defined in this notice); and</p>
<p>(B) Provide ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement.</p>
<p>Permissible Activities. An LEA may also implement other strategies that extend learning time and create community-oriented schools, such as –</p> <p>(A) Partnering with parents and parent organizations, faith and community based organizations, health clinics, other State or local agencies, and others to create safe school environments that meet students’ social, emotional, and health needs;</p>
<p>(B) Extending or restructuring the school day so as to add time for such strategies as advisory periods that build relationships between students, faculty, and other school staff;</p>
<p>(C) Implementing approaches to improve school climate and discipline, such as implementing a system of positive behavioral supports or taking steps to eliminate bullying and student harassment; or</p>
<p>(D) Expanding the school program to offer full day kindergarten or pre-kindergarten</p>
<p><u>(4) Providing Operational flexibility and sustained support</u></p> <p>Required Actions. The LEA must –</p> <p>(A) Give the school sufficient operation flexibility (such as staffing, calendars/time, and budgeting) to implement fully a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student achievement outcomes and increase high school graduation rates and</p>
<p>(B) Ensure that the school receives ongoing, intensive technical assistance and related support from the LEA, the SEA or a designated external lead partner organization</p>
<p>Permissible Activities. The LEA may also implement other strategies for providing operational flexibility and intensive support such as –</p> <p>(A) Allowing the school to be run under a new governance arrangement, such as a turn-around division within the LEA or SEA or</p>
<p>(B) Implementing a per-pupil school-based budget formula that is weighted based on student needs.</p>